

To New Readers! "Tracked to Death," by Capt. Mayne Reid, Continued in this number from Supplement.

NEW YORK Saturday Star A POPULAR PAPER FOR PLEASURE & PROFIT

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Vol. II.

E. F. Beadle,
William Adams,
David Adams,
PUBLISHERS.

NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 3, 1872.

TERMS IN ADVANCE: One copy, four months, \$1.00.
One copy, one year, \$3.00.
Two copies, one year, \$5.00.

No. 99.

DOLORES.

BY JAMES HUNTERFORD.

How her young face reveals, in hushed complaining,
What her white lips can not be brought to speak!
Her hopes of earth, relentlessly are waning,
Leaving their pining portraits on her cheek.
Her loving eyes, that still retain their brightness,
For tender lips, at times still smiling, show,
In fading hues, her former joy and lightness—
Now but the gentle ghosts of long ago.

Yes, "long ago," the records of the feelings
Name it, though but a year has dimmed her youth
Since that fair face, in each of its revealings,
Shone with the light of innocence and truth!
Her accents had the musical completeness
Which comes from purity of heart alone;
Her every motion was instinct with sweetness—
In all her life a guileless luster shone.

Oh, earth, your joys have much for which to answer:
Your sensual pleasures, spread with charming art,
Error by their indulgence spread a cancer
That slowly, fatally corrodes the heart.
While the expression that were born of heaven
Withdraw from form and features all their light.
As day's fair hues, fading with the even,
Give place unto the blackness of the night.

Still, there is hope for her; for once, recalling
Some name from pure communion cherished yet,
She bent her head, and teardrops gently falling,
Told, in their tender way, of soft regret.
Such tears are surely prelude to repentance—
Poor pale one, when thy earthly life is done,
From Mercy mayest thou hear the blessed sentence:
"The golden gates are passed and heaven is won."

Tracked to Death: OR, THE LAST SHOT.

BY CAPT. MAYNE REID.
AUTHOR OF "HELPLESS HAND," "LONE RANCHER,"
"SCALP HUNTERS," "WHITE CHIEF," ETC.

CHAPTER VI.

UNDER THE CYPRESS.

"Curse him—he's dead!"
It was Richard Darke who gave utterance
To the speech, blasphemous as brutal.

Profanity and brutality had been the
characteristics of his life. To these he had
now added a crime of deeper dye—murder.
And without remorse. As he bent over
the lifeless form of his victim, there was no
sign of contrition, either in his glances or
gestures. On the contrary, his dark, ani-
mal eyes seemed still sparkling with jealous
bale; while his hand clutched the hilt of
his bowie-knife. He had half drawn it
from its sheath, as if intending to plunge it
into the body. But this was already breath-
less—almost bloodless. What need? The
man was dead. And, with this reflection,
he pushed the blade back.

Now, for the first time, a thought of danger
flashed across his brain. A sense of fear
began to shape itself in his soul. Beyond
doubt he had done murder.

"No!" he said, in an attempt at self-justi-
fication. "It's no murder. I've killed him,
that's true; but he had had a shot at me.
I can show that his gun is discharged,
and here's his bullet-hole through the skirt
of my coat. By thunder! a close shave!"

His eyes rested for a moment on the per-
forated skirt—only a moment. His uneasiness
came back, and he continued to shape self-
excuses.

"Bah! It was a fair fight. The thing
happens every day in the streets. What
difference here among the trees? What dif-
ference, only that there were no witnesses?
Well, what if there were none? Ay! what
of it?"

The assassin stood reflecting—his glance
now bent upon the body, now sent search-
ingly through the cypresses, as if afraid that
some one might come up.

There was not much danger of this, the
spot being one of perfect solitude, as is al-
ways a cypress forest. There was no path
near trodden by the wayfarer. The planter
had no business among these great buttressed
trunks. The woodman could never as-
sail them with his ax. Only the stalking
hunter, or perhaps some runaway slave,
would be likely to stray thither.

Richard Darke cogitated as follows:

"Shall I put a bold face upon it, and con-
fess at once I killed him? I can say we
met while out hunting; that it's been a fair
fight—shot for shot; my luck to have the
last. Will that story stand?"

A pause in the soliloquy, a glance at the
corpse, another that interrogated the sur-
rounding scene, taking in the huge unshape-
ly trunks, the long, outstretching limbs,
with their pall-like festoonery of *tillandsia*—
a thought about the loneliness of the place
—of its fitness for concealing a dead body—
then a reflection as to the social status of the
man who lay murdered. All these things
passed through the mind of the murderer,
diverting him from his first half-formed in-
tention.

"It won't do," he went on, his words
showing the change. "By Heaven, it won't!
Better say nothing about it. He has no
friends who'll inquire what's become of
him; only his mother. As for Helen Arm-
strong, will she—hah!"

The final ejaculation betrayed bitterness
of spirit, as if called up by the name.
Strange, with such a sweet love-token in his
possession!

He again glanced inquiringly round, this
time with a view to secreting the corpse.
He had made up his mind to do this.

A sluggish creek meandered among the
trees, passing at some two hundred yards
from the spot, and about the same distance
from the point where it entered the swamp.

Its waters were dark, from the overhadow-
ing of the cypresses, and deep enough
for such a purpose as he was thinking of.

But it would require an effort of strength



"I'll throw some moss over the body, cover it up, and scatter more over the tracks we've made."

thither to carry the body; and to drag it
would leave tracks.

"I'll let it stay where it is. No one ever
comes this way; not likely. It may lie
there till doomsday, or till the wolves and
buzzards have made bare bones of it. Then,
who can tell whose bones they are? Ah!
better still, I'll throw some moss over the
body, cover it up, and scatter more over the
tracks we've made."

He rested his gun against a tree, and com-
menced dragging the dead-like parasite from
the branches above. It came off in
flakes, in armfuls. Half a dozen of these
he flung over the still palpitating corpse,
and then pitched on the top some pieces of
dead wood, lest a stray breeze might strip it
of its heavy shroud.

After strewing some tufts around to con-
ceal the blood and boot tracks, he stood for
a moment making survey of the scene. Ap-
parently satisfied, he once more laid hold of
his gun, and was about taking departure
from the place, when a sound, falling upon
his ear, caused him to start. Well was it
calculated to do so; for it was a sound as of
one waiting for the dead. At first he was
badly frightened, but became assured on dis-
covering the cause.

"Only the dog!" he said, as he saw Clancy's
deer-hound skulking among the trees.

When its master was shot down, the animal
had scampered off, perhaps dreading a
similar fate. It had not gone far and was
now returning little by little, drawing nearer
to the spot.

The poor brute was struggling between
two feelings—affection for his fallen master,
and fear for his own life.

Darke's gun was now empty; and he
tried to entice the animal within reach of
his knife. It would not come.

Hastily ramming a bullet into one of the
barrels, he took aim, and fired.

The shot had an effect, passing through
the fleshy part of the dog's neck; but only to
crease the skin, and draw a spurt of
blood. The animal, stung and still further
afrighted, gave out a wild howl, and went
off, without sign of stay or return.

Equally wild was the exclamation that
came from the lips of the assassin, as he
stood looking after.

"The damned cur'll go home to the house.
He'll tell a tale—perhaps guide the people
to the spot!"

As these thoughts rushed rapidly through
his mind, the murderer turned pale. It was
the first time he had experienced real fear.
In such an out-of-the-way place he had felt
safe about the concealment of the body, and
along with it his bloody deed. Then, he had
not taken the dog into account, and the
odds were in his favor.

But now, with the animal drifting, they
were heavily against him. It needed no cal-
culation of chances to make this clear. Nor
was it doubt which caused him to stand hesi-

tating. His irresolution came partly from
affright, partly from uncertainty as to what
course to take.

One thing clear enough—he could not
stay there. The hound had gone off *howling*.
It was two miles to the nearest planta-
tion; but there was an odd squatter's
cabin and clearing between. A dog going
in that guise, blood-bedraggled, and in full
cry of distress, would be certain to raise an
alarm—equally certain to beget apprehen-
sions for the safety of its missing master,
and cause search to be made.

Richard Darke did not long stand think-
ing. Despite its solitude, it was not the
place for tranquil thought—not to him. Far
off through the trees he could hear the wail
of the wounded hound. Was it fancy, or
did he hear men's voices?

He remained not to make sure. Beside
that corpse, in spite of its being so cunningly
shrouded, he dared not stay one instant
longer.

Hastily shouldering his gun, he struck off
through the forest—at first going in quick
step, then in double; soon increasing to a
run, as if driven to it by the prolonged
howling of the hound, and in his fancy he
heard human voices.

He retreated in a direction opposite to
that taken by the dog. It was also opposite
to the way leading to his own house—his
father's plantation. It forced him further
into the swamp, across slough and through
soft mud, where he made deep footmarks.
Though he had carefully concealed the
body, and obliterated all other traces of the
strife, in his "scare" he did not think of
those he was now leaving.

The murderer is only cunning before the
crime; after it, if he have conscience, or
rather, having not courage and coolness, he
loses self-possession, and is sure to leave a
trail for the detective.

So was it with Richard Darke, as he ran
wildly away from the scene of his crime,
taking long strides. His only thought was
to put space between himself and that ac-
cursed crying cur—so he anathematized the
animal, hissing the words through his teeth
whose cries appeared commingling with the
shouts of men—the voices of avengers!

CHAPTER VII.

A COON-CHASE INTERRUPTED.

THERE is no district in the Southern
States without its noted coon-hunter. And,
notedly, the coon-hunter is a negro. The
sport is too tame or too humble to tempt the
white man. Sometimes the sons of "poor
white trash" take a part in it; but it is
usually resigned to the plantation darky.

In the old times of slavery, every planta-
tion could boast of one or more of these sa-
ble Nimrods. To them, coon-catching was
a profit as well as a sport; the skins keep-
ing them in tobacco, and whisky when ad-

dicted to drinking it. The flesh, too, though
little esteemed by white palates, was a
bonne-bouche to the negro, with whom flesh
meat was a scarce commodity. It often
furnished his Dinah with the means of a
roast.

The plantation of Ephraim Darke was no
exception to the general rule. It, too, had
its coon-hunter—a negro named, or nick-
named, "Blue Bill." The qualifying term
came from a cerulean tinge that in certain
lights appeared upon the surface of his sa-
ble epidermis. Otherwise he was black as
ebony.

Blue Bill was a mighty hunter of his
kind, passionately fond of the coon-chase—
too much, indeed, for his own safety and
comfort. It carried him abroad, when the
discipline of the plantation required him to
be at home, and more than once had his
shoulders been scored by the lash for so ab-
senting himself.

All this had not cured him of his pro-
clivity. Unluckily for Richard Darke, it
had not.

On the evening of Clancy's being shot
down, as described, Blue Bill was abroad,
and with a small cur, which he had trained
to his favorite chase, was ranging the woods
near the edge of the cypress swamp.

"He had 'treed' an old he-coon, and
was preparing to climb up to this animal's
nest—a large knot-hole in a sycamore—
when a shot startled him. He was more dis-
turbed by the peculiar crack, than by the
fact of its being the report of a gun. His
ear being accustomed to the sound, he knew
it to have proceeded from the double-barrel
belonging to his young master—just then
the last man he could or would have wished
to meet. He was away from the 'quarter'
without 'pass' or leave of any kind.

His first thought was to continue his as-
scent of the tree, and conceal himself among
its branches.

But his dog, still upon the ground, that
would betray him?

While hurriedly reflecting what was best
for him to do, he heard a second shot; and
then a third, coming quickly after; while
mingling with the reports were men's
voices, apparently in angry expostulation.
He heard, too, the baying of a hound.

"Gorramity!" muttered Blue Bill, "dar's
a skrimmage goin' on dar—a fight, I reckon,
to de de!" An I know who's between. De
mass shot an Mass' Dick's gun; de oder am
Mass' Charle's Clancy. By golly! 't ain't
safe dis chile he seed' heah, nohow. 'Wha'
may I hide mass'ef?"

Again he looked upward, scanning the
sycamore, then down at his dog, and once
more at the trunk of the tree. It was em-
braced by a creeper—a gigantic grape-vine,
up which an ascent might easily be made,
so easily that there need be no difficulty
about carrying his cur along with him. If
was the ladder he had intended using to

reach the treed coon. The dread of his
young master coming that way, and if so,
surely "cowhiding" him, told the negro
there was no time to be wasted in vacilla-
tion.

Nor did he waste any. Without further
delay he threw his arm around the coon-
dog, lifted the unresisting animal from the
ground, and then "swarmed" up the creep-
er like a she-bear carrying one of her cubs.

In ten seconds after, he was ensconced
in a crotch of the sycamore, where he would
be screened from the observation of any one
who might pass underneath, by the cluster-
ing foliage of the parasite.

Now, feeling secure, the coon-hunter bent
his ears more attentively to listen. He
still heard the voices in conversation. Then
only one of them, as if the other no longer
replied. The one continuing to speak he
could distinguish as that of his young mas-
ter, though he could not make out the
words spoken. The distance was too great,
and the sound was interrupted by the thick
standing trunks of the trees. It was a low
monotone—might have been a soliloquy—
and ended in an ejaculation. Even this
he could only tell by the abrupt terminating
tone.

Then succeeded a short interval of silence,
as if both men had gone away. Blue Bill
was in hopes they had, or that his young
master might have done so. His hope was
the stronger that the tree in which he had
secreted himself was not upon the way
Richard Darke should take, returning to his
father's plantation. It was night, and he
would no doubt be going home.

While thus reflecting, the coon-hunter's
ear was again saluted by a sound. This
time it was the hound that spoke—not
barking as before, but in a low, lugubrious
wail, a sort of whimper, which appeared
also to come from a somewhat different di-
rection. Then again the voice of a man—
Massa Dick's—who appeared to be coaxing
the dog and calling the animal up.

Another short interval of silence—another
shot, quickly followed by an angry excla-
mation; then the hound was heard in contin-
uous howling, that gradually grew more in-
distinct, as if the animal was going off on
the opposite side.

To the slave, absent without leave, all
these sounds seemed ominous, indicative of
some tragical occurrence. As he sat in the
fork of the sycamore, listening to them, he
trembled like an aspen. Still his presence
of mind did not forsake him, and this was
directed to keep his own dog silent. Hear-
ing the hound, the cur would have given
tongue in response, but for Blue Bill's fin-
gers clasped chokingly round its throat—
only detached to give the animal an occa-
sional cuff.

Once more stillness held possession of the
forest. Soon again was it disturbed by the
tread of footsteps and a swishing among the
palmettoes. Some one was passing hastily
through them, evidently coming toward the
tree, where the coon-hunter was concealed.
More than ever Blue Bill trembled upon
his perch; tighter than ever clutching the
throat of his canine companion. For he
felt sure the man whose footsteps told of
approach was his master—or, rather, his
master's son. They told also of his running
—a retreat, rapid, headlong, confused. Up-
on this the peccant slave founded hopes of
escaping observation.

They did not disappoint him. In a few
seconds after, he saw Richard Darke come
from the direction, in which the shots and
voices had been heard. He was running as
for very life—the more like it, that he ran
crouching, at intervals making a short
stop, and standing with his chin upon his
shoulder, to listen.

When opposite the sycamore—almost un-
der it—he made a pause longer than the
rest. The sweat appeared to be pouring
down his cheeks, over his eyebrows, almost
blinding him. He drew a handkerchief from
his coat-pocket, wiped it off, and then, re-
placing the kerchief, ran on again.

In doing this he dropped something, un-
seen by himself; but which could not, and
did not escape the observation of the coon-
hunter so conspicuously posted. It resembled
a letter, in an envelope of the ordinary
kind.

This it proved to be, when Blue Bill, cau-
tiously descending from the sycamore, ap-
proached the spot where it had fallen, and
took it up.

The negro can not read; nor does he even
take out the letter, although the envelope is
open. An instinct, that it may in some way,
or at some time, be useful, prompts him to
put it in his pocket.

This done, he stands reflecting. There is
now no sound to disturb him. The footsteps
of Richard Darke are no longer heard.
Their tread, gradually growing indistinct,
has died away; and the cypress forest once
more relapsed into somber silence. The
only sound the coon-hunter now hears is
the thumping of his own heart against his
ribs, and this is loud enough.

No longer has it to do with the coon he
had succeeded in tracing. The animal, de-
voted to certain death, will owe its escape
to an accident; and may now sleep securely
within its nest. The hunter has other
thoughts—emotions so strong as to drive
coon-hunting clean out of his head. Among
them are thoughts relating to himself and
his safety. Though unseen by his young
master—his presence even unsuspected—he
feels that an unlucky chance has placed him
in a position of danger. His instinct has
already warned him of it.

That a tragedy has been enacted he not
only surmises, but is pretty sure of.

What is he to do? Go on to the place

where he has heard the shouts, and ascertain what has actually occurred?

At first he feels like doing this, but soon changes his intention. He is frightened at what is already known to him, and dares not know more. His young master may be a murderer—the way in which he saw him retreating almost says so—what then? Is he to make himself acquainted with the crime, and bear witness against the man who has committed it? As a slave, he knows his testimony will count for nothing in a court of justice. Still, would it strengthen suspicion. But as a slave—the slave of Ephraim Burke—he also knows, his life would not be worth much, after he had given it.

This last reflection decides him; and, still carrying his coon-dog under his arm, he starts off from the spot, going in skulking gait, never stopping, never feeling safe till within the limits of the "negro quarter." Not till inside his own cabin, seated by the side of his Phebe, with his coon-dog smelling among the pots, and his "picanninies" clustering around him and climbing upon his knees.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 97.)

We have now, in the hands of the artists, for illustration,

ALBERT W. AIKEN'S NEW ROMANCE, THE RED MAZEPPA; OR, THE MADMAN OF THE PLAINS.

which, in startling power, weird mystery, exciting interest of novelty and character, will more than satisfy the great expectations of our readers. In it, in several respects, this favorite writer has outdone himself; and the serial appearance of it, in our columns, will constitute one of the literary sensations of the year.

Ida's Wedding-Dress.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

A LARGE, royally-appointed apartment it was, with delicate rose-pink painted walls, with light lavender and gold panels inlaid; gold-bronzed gasoliers depending from the center and sides of the high ceiling; a gorgeous Moquet carpet, that the foot lost its echoes in; rare, antique furniture, and grand red pendings. Altogether quite a scene from fairy-land was that back room, in Senator Beaumont's mansion, that overlooked snow-laden gardens, and rich-branched trees, that shone like a diamond mine in the bright sunshine of that January morning.

And quite in keeping with the elegant surroundings was the occupant of the boudoir, the dainty little lady who sat curled up in a corner of the pink-plush ottoman, with a fresh novel before her lustrous brown eyes.

Beautiful eyes they were, too, that gleamed and sparkled, and frowned and smiled at will; eyes that had pierced many a heart of more susceptibility, but none so deep and sore as Girard Gardner's, the young soldier whose diamond and opal ring graced Winnie Beaumont's taper finger, as it daintily turned leaf after leaf of "Archandros."

They had been betrothed these six months, young Colonel Gardner and Winnie; and now, as she sat alone on that January morning, she was wondering why it was that, with all her wealth and beauty, she had been the one Girard Gardner had chosen.

She almost idolized him; he was brave, handsome, and fast gaining added laurels. Who wouldn't have loved him? and Winnie's eyes sparkled with pride over her possession.

She was proud of him, too proud, for that self-same rank in other channels, added to a selfish indifference of others, was the great mistake in her otherwise sweet character.

Even now, as she rose from her graceful position, there came a frown over her arched eyebrows as she consulted her watch.

"Twelve, and my dress not yet here! and I promised Girard he should see it when he came at one. What nuisances dressmakers are!"

It may have seemed of immense moment to her that the fairy ball-dress she had ordered home at eleven, was still detained; but it hardly need have called forth the chilling words that greeted the entrance, a moment or two later, of a fair, slight girl.

"Ida Western! and you have broken your word. This is the third time about that dress."

Winnie's brown eyes scowled at the sweet, pure face that flushed slightly under her cross words; then a low, lady-like voice answered:

"I did not suppose an hour at this time of day could make so much difference. I am sorry if I have disappointed you, Miss Beaumont."

She carefully laid the loosely-folded robe on the sofa Winnie had vacated, and began unpinning the towel that held it.

"Of course, you are dreadfully sorry I am annoyed; I believe dilatory dressmakers' grievances greatly to hear."

Winnie was sneering; she was in a little fever of uneasiness, lest Colonel Girard Gardner should happen in, and take her by surprise, before she herself had examined the elegant robe.

Ida's fingers trembled slightly as she removed the tiny pins, and only for that, and by the dull pain that shadowed her gray eyes, would you have known how hard the imperious beauty's words hurt her.

But she was only a dressmaker—a tasty, cheap artist who must expect, with her customer's patronage, a fair share of fault-finding. And yet, it was hard, and she, too, so young and lovely, and lonely!

Winnie did not hear the low, fluttering sigh that escaped Ida Western's lips, as she shook out the gauzy dress, with its snowy-white lace ruffles, its dainty gossamer puffings, its rich insertions, and filmy tucks.

You are pleased, Miss Beaumont. I tried my very best to make it to suit you."

Winnie's eyes sparkled—it was elegantly made, and no mistake. So stylish and tasty, and still so purely simple.

"I think it will suit very nicely, indeed, and I'm sure it will be becoming, with an embroidered gold and green sash, and gold grapes in my curls—why, what's this?"

She had espied a tiny, tiny darn under one of the puffed flounces she had been caressing with her dainty white fingers, and she grew lively severe as she raised her eyes inquiringly.

Ida flushed, then almost deprecatingly answered:

"It was an accident, Miss Beaumont; my scissors fell off the sewing-stand and tore just a little bit of a hole. I didn't think it would hurt—it would never show under that flounce on the trails, and I have mended it nearly away."

She was looking with flushing cheeks and anxious eyes in Winnie's face, seeing the anger that was surging over it like a crimson cloud.

"You designing creature, Ida Western! as if I would wear a darned ball-dress, or pay you for mending holes and mending them! You know you never would have told me, and such a price—a hundred and twenty-five dollars that you've marked on it."

"It's very elaborate, Miss Beaumont, and I've been three weeks making it, all by hand, as you objected to machine-work on tulle and crepe."

"I know I objected, and I also object to pay twenty-five dollars for a dress that you have spoiled—irreparably ruined! As if I would wear a patched ball-dress. You can take it away again."

A little startled cry fell from Ida's lips. "Miss Beaumont! you'll not throw it on my hands! It will ruin me!"

"I can't help that. You'd no business to spoil the dress—take it, I say, and do not depend on my orders in the future—Oh, Girard!"

For just then, a tall, mustached gentleman in uniform came in the room, and Winnie's face grew all radiant again.

His was a little graver than usual, but Winnie was not a keen physiognomist, nor did she observe the glance of ill-subdued, respectful admiration he cast on Ida Western as she turned her face from them, with her lashes glittering with tears, to carry home the fated ball-dress.

"Fated," I said? she little knew, or Winnie Beaumont either, how fated it was to them both.

"Beautiful? why, Winnie, it's magnificent! and only a hundred dollars! Where did you get it?"

And Winnie Beaumont's friend clasped her hands in enthusiastic ecstasy over the ball-dress that lay in foamy billows over the pink, plush ottoman.

"A little gleeful laugh came rippling through the scarlet lips.

"It is such a rich joke, Nell! You see my dressmaker, Ida Western, you know, asked a hundred and twenty-five for it, but I discovered, almost miraculously, a tiny darn—there, see? It'll never show, in the world—and I valued it at twenty-five dollars, you know—enough to keep me in caramels and cream chocolates for a month or so. I made her take it back, and then got Jennie Blakely to offer a hundred for it for me."

And the gay laughter of the two young belles mingled as they discussed the subject.

"I knew she'd be glad enough to let it go, and she'll never know I purchased it. I think it is the richest joke I've heard this long while. I don't know what Girard'll say, though, for he saw her take it away."

Winnie twisted and twirled the engagement-ring as she spoke.

"Oh, tell him you changed your mind—tell him any thing that comes in your head first."

A little troubled sigh followed the "friend's" (?) advice, for Winnie was generally vacillating.

"I don't know about that, Nell. I'd be almost afraid to look Girard in the face if I lied to him. But I am sure I must tell him something."

And just in the landing, outside the door that was slightly ajar, Colonel Gardner listened and smiled grimly—and went down the velvet-carpeted stairs again, and from the house—straight to Ida Western's!

It was a small room, bright with gaslight that shone brilliant over the green-white carpet, the walnut furniture, the chiroms on the wall, the open piano, a cheery, homelike place, where one would be sure of a welcome who called one's self Ida Western's friend.

And Ida herself, in a daintily trimmed black alpaca, and white ruffled swiss apron, sat under the drop-jet, her flying fingers adding the finishing touches to a velvet sacque on which she was sewing wide guipure lace.

A bright expectant light was in her eyes, that deepened to intense beauty as she heard footsteps on the stairs, and a pink flush tinged her cheeks when the door opened, and a gentleman entered, his brown, curly hair full of large snow-flakes, and his army overcoat whitened with them.

"Ida, my darling!"

That was the betrothed lover's greeting after a six months' absence; and then, with one arm tight around her supple waist, and the other holding and caressing her little brown, plump hand, Colonel Gardner told her over and over again how he loved her, and now, after so long and lonely a time, he had come to take her, his wife, with him to the Western fort where he was in command.

She must marry him on the morrow; and with blushes and downcast eyes she said she would.

"To be sure, Girard, I have no wedding-dress prepared."

"This will do—you are as perfect as a picture in it, my Ida."

And they talked it all over, never wearying of telling each other of the days, two years back, Girard had broken the engagement, with Miss Winnie Beaumont, her unprincipled conduct, her harshness to the obscure sewing-girl, who had enslaved the gallant soldier's heart that very hour when she strove to conceal her tear-pearled gray eyes from him.

They liked to talk it over, and to-night their communion seemed doubly sweet, for, to-morrow—to-morrow—she would be his very own forever!

And just then, when she had raised her sweet, shy eyes to his passionate face, there came a low, half-timid rap on the door.

Girard opened it, and in the entry stood a woman in heavy black dress, shawl, and veil.

"Is the dressmaker in—Miss Western?"

Colonel Gardner half-started at the strangely familiar voice; his face was in the shadow, or, perhaps, he would have started more at a recognition, that would have surprised him.

Ida came gracefully forward.

"What is it? Come in."

She entered, bearing a carefully folded package.

"It is the last remaining dress of a once

expensive wardrobe. The owner thought you, who made it, might purchase it again, if only for a trifle. It has never been worn but once."

This stranger had explained to Ida, while Colonel Gardner had stepped into the entry while the business was transacted.

But before Ida could reply, he returned, and sauntered over to the mantelpiece.

A low, agonized cry suddenly came from under the heavy veil—and the lady reeled, and fainted.

Very radiant was Ida Western in her wedding robe of pure white, that next day noon; and Girard Gardner, as he stooped to kiss her, laid his hand almost reverently on its filmy folds.

"Isn't it almost miraculous, Ida, that this selfsame dress that was the means of our first acquaintance, should come to you again, for your wedding-dress, and brought by the one who purchased it of you?"

"Poor Miss Beaumont! Oh, Girard, how she frightened me last night, when she swooned away! To think that such sudden reverses have come to her, while I am happy—oh, so, so happy!"

"Her tender, gray eyes fully attested her truthfulness."

"Are you, my dearest? And, God willing, you never shall be otherwise while I live."

And, with his arms around her, he blessed the day he first had seen his wife's Wedding Dress.

The Prophet's Rock.

BY MISS M. F. BURLINGAME.

FRANK WILSON picked up his hat and started, but paused with his hand on the door-knob, saying:

"It's no use to continue this scene any longer."

"It's no use to continue any thing any longer," answered Dora Maxwell, the red spot on her cheek growing brighter.

"Just as you say; I am not particular."

"That's the first time you have agreed with me this evening," she said, angrily.

His eyes flashed defiantly, but he remained silent, waiting.

"It seems that we have made a mistake," she went on, seeing that he did not intend to reply, "that we are unsuited, that we can not agree and be happy together, and I think the sooner we separate the better."

"I am of the same opinion. I'm sure I have no wish to marry a vixen."

"And I don't want to live with a tyrant."

"I'm sure I don't want you to."

"Then you may consider yourself free," she replied, with an imperious gesture, and turned to the piano, as though she could annul all the past by that angry sentence.

Wilson stepped into the hall without another word, waited a moment hoping that Dora would call him back, then slammed the front door and was gone.

"So that's the end of that," he muttered. "Big fool I've been to be blind so long! Such a temper! Unreasonable too! No man save Job could have patience to live with her. Glad I found her out before I was tied fast."

He strode viciously down Washington street, looking into the billiard saloons, and the ten-pin alleys, and the Dutch beer-gardens, feeling tempted for the first time to go in somewhere and make a night of it.

He concluded, however, not to disgrace his manhood, though he had been a fool and was just awakened from the sweetest dream of his life, and finally he went home and tried to sleep.

Dora soliloquized something after this fashion:

"I'm glad it's over! He's a perfect tyrant! If he can't have his own way in everything there's a fuss. I won't be imposed upon by my husband, if I have to live and die an old maid! So there!"

She went to her room to finish her preparations for the grand excursion on the next day to the Tippecanoe battle-ground. A train had been chartered for the occasion, and all were anticipating an unusually merry time. Dora had dreamed over it for a week. Frank had planned a little ramble together in the woodlands; she had arranged her dress in view of looking as pretty as possible for his sake, and through her agency more than one of his favorite delicacies were ready for her lunch-basket. And now, she and Frank had quarreled, and he was not any more to her than Dick Gray or John Nelson.

"I don't care," she said, defiantly, over and over again, determined to make herself believe it. "I don't care, I'm going, anyhow, and I'll enjoy myself as much, if not more."

You see it was a regular lovers' quarrel about nothing. Both were hot-tempered, and as self-willed as a pair of unbroken mules. One word led to another, until each thought the other a selfish, unreasonable creature. Bitter, stinging sentences were uttered, and all the love and trust forgotten.

When they met in the depot next morning, each was ready for a dignified reconciliation, provided the other would make the first advances. But Dora, determined not to be imposed upon, would not even give Frank a friendly glance, and he was equally foolish and obstinate.

So she devoted herself to half a dozen men, and he to as many girls, and each stole a furtive, cautious glance at the other. In the train and on the grounds, they were the gayest and witziest of the crowd, yet all the while their hearts ached as though they would break; and the blue sky seemed black; and the bright sunshine, gloomy; and the twittering birds and fragrant flowers, a mockery; and life, a burden of bitterness. All this sounds absurd, but it is just as they did and felt.

In the afternoon, Dora sent off her cavaliers on various pretexts, that she might have a little quiet in which to nerve herself anew. While sitting alone, her seven-year-old brother came sauntering up.

"It's a kind of humbug, isn't it, Dode?" he asked, with the air of a discontented octogenarian.

"I don't know. Haven't you been enjoying yourself?"

"Only tolerably."

"Why, what's the matter?"

"Why, first, Bob Norris couldn't come. His mother said he was too little, and he's half a head taller than me, and most as big as his pa. I seen him in the depot this mornin'."

He was a notion to come, anyhow, if he did have his everyday clothes on. Only he was 'fraid the cars would run off the track, or somethin' awful happen, 'cause

his last Sunday school-book told about a boy that runned off when his mother wouldn't let him go, and he went out in a boat with some folks, and the boat struck a rock and went to the bottom, clean out of sight, and nobody ever knew what become of that boy."

"What is the humbug?"

"Why, the battle-ground. It's just like any other grove. I thought there'd be fortifications, and arrows, and Indian bones, and maybe I'd find somethin' that belonged to General Harrison."

"It has been a long time since the battle."

"I know. An old gentleman told me all about it while ago. He was a bully old feller."

"Don't be disrespectful."

"I ain't. He was bully. He showed me where the Indians hid; and where the soldiers threw up breastworks, they ain't nothin' now but little low mounds; and where the soldiers were buried, there's just little hollows there. He showed me spots on the trees where bullets lodged, and I tried to dig one out, but I broke my knife and didn't get the bullet either."

"Never mind, I'll buy you a new knife."

"I won't, be my old one. Uncle Harry gave me that when I was a little boy. He showed the rock to other side of that cornfield, where the Prophet sat and sung, and told the Indians how to fight. I wanted to go and see it, but I didn't like to go by myself, and I couldn't ask the old gentleman to go, 'cause he's feeble. I asked Dave (his sixteen-year-old brother), but he only said 'Pshaw!' and went off to see the 'Lightning Bugs' play base-ball. Then I asked Rose Nelson, but she called me a dour, and said she was 'fraid she'd tear her dress, and off she went with Frank Wilson. I don't like her now, and I won't have her for my sweet-heart any more. I don't like Frank, either. Why isn't he with you to-day, like he used to be?"

"How would you like for me to go to the Prophet's Rock with you?" asked Dora, ignoring the pertinent question.

"Jolly! Will you go, Dode?" wistfully.

"Yes, Johnny, come on, I'm tired of staying here."

They clambered down the bank and crossed Tippecanoe creek near the mineral springs back of the seminary.

"Let's cross on the 'spension bridge,'" said Johnny, stopping on a stone in the middle of the stream.

"No, it is too far. We'll cross it when we come back, and then go right on to the station. The train will leave in less than two hours."

They went across the bottom, along the edge of the cornfield, to the bluff where the Prophet's Rock is situated. After sitting on it a short time, they rambled up a little ravine in search of spring flowers.

A storm had been gathering all the afternoon, so quietly that the excursionists did not notice it. Suddenly a dark, thick cloud overspread the sky, and a loud thunder-peal sounded an alarm.

"Come, Johnny," said Dora, "we will be caught in the storm."

"Wait a minute; it don't rain soon as it thunders. Guess I've found a squirrel's nest."

"Come, Johnny, we must go," she called anxiously, a few minutes later.

Johnny started reluctantly. They were far up the ravine, the storm came on quickly, and when they reached the Prophet's Rock the rain was beginning to fall rapidly. Dora saw that it was impossible to go on. The wind almost lifted her from her feet, and the rain would soon be blinding. She looked out for shelter, and discovering a ledge of rocks protected by thick bushes, she and Johnny crept under it.

"I'm so sorry we come," said poor Johnny, "now the train will go off and leave us."

"Maybe the rain will stop so we can get there in time," said Dora, cheerily. "If it don't, we can go on the regular train at seven."

The storm increased in fury. The wind raged along the valley like a wild beast let loose; the rain dashed down almost in rivulets, the flashes of lightning were blinding in their brightness, and the thunder-peals shook the bluffs. Dora heard the excursion train leave, and the seven o'clock train, yet she dared not face the furious storm. After dark, the wind lulled, and the rain slackened to a drizzle. Dora and Johnny crawled out and tried to look around.

"We can go over to the town, can't we?" asked Johnny; "we can cross on the 'spension bridge.'"

"It is so dark I fear we could not find the bridge, and if we did we could not see to walk over safely."

She called several times, in hopes of obtaining assistance, but the roaring and rushing of the Tippecanoe, then swollen to the dimensions of a small river, overpowered her voice.

"I guess we will have to camp out, to-night," she said, turning to their place of refuge.

"The bears will get us," cried Johnny, terrified.

"Oh, no; the bears were all killed long ago."

"I'm so cold and hungry, and I want to go home," he sobbed, pitifully.

"I know, dear; but we will have to be very brave to-night. We'll play we are hunters, searching for a famous white deer, and that we got caught in a storm, and lost our provisions, and we'll tell long stories in camp. I'll tell you a story—then you must tell me one."

She commenced a long, wonderful story, and in half an hour Johnny was asleep.

Dora was tired, and chilled, and cramped, and hungry. The suffering and heart-ache of the day had unstrung every nerve, and rendered them so sensitive that her whole being trembled with pain. The fatigue and excitement of the storm had weakened her to exhaustion. The drear darkness and loneliness oppressed her, and no longer compelled to keep up a brave appearance for Johnny's sake, she sobbed and shivered like a sick, weak child.

The wind surged and moaned with a human pathos in its minor key. To her strained, excited hearing, the slow-falling rain sounded like clouds dropping on a coffin-lid, and the rushing Tippecanoe like a cataclysm. Through the darkness and rain she could see the lights in the village, and her imagination pictured the warmth and shelter, and love they represented, from which she was separated by the overflowed bottom and swollen stream.

She and Johnny were shut out from the world, imprisoned by the darkness and storm, all alone.

"So lonely 'twas, that God himself scarce seemed to be."

She could suffer through that night some way; the morning would bring light and

warmth, and food, and home; but her life would still be enveloped in darkness and storm. A thousand memories of Frank's goodness and love, and tenderness, rushed through her soul in quick succession.

"If Frank were only here," she wailed. "This comes from that miserable quarrel. Why were we not more forbearing and patient? Why was I so hasty and hateful? Oh, Frank, my darling! have I lost you?"

In the solemn solitude she realized how intensely she loved him.

In the confusion and fright occasioned by the storm, Dora and Johnny were not missed. Dave supposed they were with Wilson in another car. Wilson, distracted with Rose Nelson's flight, thought them safe with Dave, and did not search. It was nearly dark when they reached Indianapolis, and a drizzling rain was falling. Brothers and fathers, laden with umbrellas and cloaks, were waiting in the Union depot. Mr. Maxwell was there, looking in vain for Dora and Johnny.

"Dave!" he exclaimed, seizing that youngster by the shoulder, "where are Dora and Johnny?"

"Guess they're here somewhere. Haven't seen 'em since dinner."

"Help me look, quickly; I can't find them."

Wilson, passing, heard the conversation, and handing Miss Rose over to another escort, joined in the search.

The three met a few minutes later for consultation. They could obtain no clue to the missing. No one had seen them since the beginning of the storm.

"They must have been left behind!" exclaimed Dave.

They rushed into the telegraph office.

"No office at Battle Ground," answered the operator.

"The regular down-town train leaves Battle Ground at seven," he said, when the trouble was explained. "If they were left, they will probably come on that."

"Is there no way to learn whether they are on it?"

"I can telegraph to Lafayette to inquire of the conductor. The train stops there ten minutes."

"Do so, then."

Dave ran home to make sure they had not come.

"They are not here," he reported, panting. "Jennie Gray says she saw them across the creek shortly before it thundered."

"She must be at Battle Ground somewhere," said Wilson, turning pale. "I am going back on the next train."

"So am I," said Dave; "it will leave soon."

Frank Wilson had ample time for reflection, and his thoughts were followed by repentance. He upbraided himself for his harshness, his selfishness, his cruel work. He imagined her struggling with the storm, caught and carried away by the relentless current, and lying somewhere dead and white. His dear little Dora, he could never forgive himself.

It seemed ages before they reached Battle Ground at eleven. The agent and two or three sleepy-looking men were yet in the ticket-office. The agent had not heard of any one being

A VISION OF REST.

BY ST. ELMO.

The dark-blue fringe of the Eastern sky,
With the red moon yading softly on,
Through azure depths, with a weary sigh—
That Memory builds some hopes upon.

The shadows draped with a silvery cast,
Where the fire-flies lit about the stream,
Whose pearls bells with a rush flow past,
Like the mazes of some magic dream.

The tall pine trees with their tassels fair,
And the moonlight streaming in between,
Was a sight that made the fairies stare,
As they danced around the sylvan scene.

Oh, weary heart, with your load of woe,
Arise, and crush back the thrill of dread,
That shrouds your life with a dismal flow,
Recalling some thoughts that should be dead.

Out on the waves of the fleecy air,
The low-toned note of the whippoorwill
Soddy accents in a mellow pray,
Through the arch of Heaven, so calm and still.

Over the stream where the lilies grow,
And the dew-drops shed their silver tears,
Where the perfumed breezes gently blow,
Rippling the waves of the crystal spheres.

Where the Mountain Heart's Ease sheds delight,
Kissing the folds of the star-lit air,
And the moonbeams struggling cold and white,
Mid the rocks where fairies plait their hair.

This is the place where the weary soul,
After the toil of the day are o'er,
Can strive once more for the destined goal,
That his lonely heart has sought before.

Oh, voiceless moon, with your pale, sad face,
With its to a weary mortal's sigh,
And remove from his lone heart the trace
Of the wither'd hopes that "round it lie!"

Just over the dim horizon's bar,
The flush of the early morn appears,
And o'er his one, each beautiful star,
With its weal of glory, disappears.

And a sweet, delicious sense of rest,
As the shadows here and there grow dim,
Steals softly into my troubled breast,
And my soul draws nearer unto Him.

The Red Rajah:

THE SCOURGE OF THE INDIES.

A TALE OF THE MALAYAN ISLES.

BY FREDERICK WHITTAKER,

(LAUNCE PONTZ).

AUTHOR OF "MUSTANG HUNTERS," "KNIGHT
OF THE RUBIES," "THE GRIZZLY HUN-
TERS," "THE BLACK WIZARD,"
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

MISS EARLE.

THE next morning, every one was down to breakfast bright and early. Don Gregorio made his appearance in the same solemn black as on the evening before, but Claude and his host were both in cool white duck. Don Gregorio's eyes were bent anxiously on Marguerite as she came in. The child looked pale, as if she had passed a poor night, but no remarks from any one indicated that she had been seen outside.

When Julia Earle came down to table, breakfast was half over. The young lady was a perfect picture of health and beauty. Don Gregorio's bow of greeting was lower than usual. In spite of himself, he felt pleased with Julia's dazzling looks.

Miss Earle opened a rattling conversation with the don, and brought every one at table in. The only silent one this morning was Claude. He was anxious to get away about his business, and excused himself as soon as possible.

"At what o'clock shall I expect you, monsieur?" asked Rodriguez, as he left the room.

"As soon as I can get back," returned the Virginian; "I will bring a horse for you."

"Au revoir," said the don, pleasantly; and the sailor left the room.

"What are you going to do this morning?" asked Julia, of the don, as Claude left.

"We are to take a ride through the country, and see the lions," he responded. "The senor Claudio has promised to make up a party with some officers from the garrison."

"But I thought that he sailed this morning?" said Julia, looking at him shrewdly.

"He has given up the idea, at my request, senorita."

"Indeed?" said the lady. "Why, you must have fascinated the gentleman, Don Gregorio."

"I have sometimes been told that I have fascinating manners," said Don Gregorio, calmly.

Julia Earle looked at him for several minutes, but the don was too old an actor to be disconcerted.

The old merchant had taken his departure to his warehouse before this, and Marguerite was the only other person in the room besides the servants.

Julia suddenly rose from the table.

"Don Gregorio," she said, "will you come into the garden a few minutes? I want to speak to you."

Artless little Marguerite started guiltily. She could not conceal her emotions. Julia did not seem to notice her, however. Don Gregorio rose and bowed.

"I shall be only too happy, with so charming a companion," he said.

The lady took his arm, and they left the room, poor little Marguerite remaining behind, half-fearing, half-doubting that something was the matter.

Julia, as she passed through the hall, caught up a broad hat, and set it on her sunny curls, and then walked quietly by Don Gregorio's side till they reached the eventful arbor.

There she took her seat, and spread out her gauzy skirts over the bench, like white billows. Don Gregorio stood before her, hat in hand, and waited for the lady to open the conversation.

From a certain meaning look, it was evident that something was on her mind.

"Don Gregorio," she said, presently, "do you think I have good eyesight?"

"If the beauty of the organ betokens strength of vision, senorita, your eyesight must be wonderful."

And the don bowed low.

"Thank you, senor. Compliments apart, I can see as far as most people. Well, then, will you please to look toward the house?"

"I obey, senorita."

"You see that there is an opening in this arbor?"

"I do."

"And opposite to it there is a window?"

"Well, senorita."

"Well, senor. That window is mine."

"Happy window!" said Don Gregorio, sentimentally.

"You are fond of moonlight walks, senor. I see. You take them even when there are tigers about. I saw the creature you killed. But then, senor, other people may be fond of moonlight. I am, for one, I prefer to enjoy it from my window."

There was a beautiful moon last night, Don Gregorio; but I should never have dreamed of walking out to enjoy it. I saw you go out, and I thought to myself that you were rash. But I did not know you well enough to remonstrate with you. So I kept still by my window behind the curtains."

Don Gregorio stood looking at her steadily with a cool but rather stern gaze. He did not try any more compliments. He was measuring his situation. How much did this girl know or suspect?

Julia looked at him in turn out of her magnificent blue eyes. Her gaze was one of decided admiration for the bold, handsome stranger. She waited for him to speak.

"Well, senorita, and is that all you have to tell me?" he asked, at last.

"Not quite," she replied, smiling. "I saw you walk out into the garden and disappear among the bushes. I had almost made up my mind to call to you, and warn you, when I saw another figure come out and follow you. Senor Don Gregorio Rodriguez, that second figure was a woman. More than that, it was Marguerite, and I know her."

"Well, well," he said, abruptly. "To the end of this. You saw that. What else did you see?"

"I saw you two together in this arbor, senor. You seemed to be on excellent terms for people introduced last night. I resolved to be sure. I beheld you through an opera-glass. It was you and Marguerite de Favannes, and she lay in your arms, and you kissed her. That set me to thinking. I said to myself, 'They have seen each other before. Where was it?' And as I thought, I could come to but one conclusion. Either Marguerite de Favannes is a loose, abandoned wretch without a shred of character—"

"Hush! if you please," he said, sternly. "Or," she went on, quietly, "Don Gregorio Rodriguez is an impostor, and has known her before. And the only man who has known her before is—"

She paused.

Don Gregorio Rodriguez drew himself up to his full height.

"You are quite right," he said. "I will spare you further words. I am the Red Rajah."

Julia Earle looked at him now with undisguised interest.

"You are a brave man," she said, quietly. "A desperate man. Do you not fear your enemies here? Think. If I were to denounce you, death on the gallows would be your portion."

"But you will not denounce me," he said, coolly.

"Why not?"

"Because, to do it, pretty lady, you must go to Singapore. Bthink you. You are alone in this garden with a noted PIRATE, whose very name signifies the blood he has shed. What is to prevent my burying a knife in your white bosom, and leaving here before any one knows of it?"

"Every thing, my lord Rajah," she answered, rising, and looking him straight in the eye, without blenching or quailing. "In the first place, you are no Malay."

"How do you know?" he asked.

"Every feature of your face is Caucasian, and no Malay ever spoke French as you do. Being a Caucasian, you are not a coward. So I am safe."

Necessity may make a man do many things," he answered.

"Well, then, there is a second reason. If you were to murder me, how could you get to sea? It would be found out before noon, and the whole squadron lies in port. How could your vessel pass under the guns of five frigates and the Avenger?"

Even while she spoke, came the boom of a distant gun.

"There is your answer!" said the Red Rajah, with a smile of triumph, folding his arms, and standing before her. "The squadron is under way now, to sail after the Red Rajah. And while they are hunting for a vanished nation, among a desolated Archipelago, the Red Rajah himself stands in Singapore; and his fleet lies hidden in fifty little creeks round here; and his men are scattered all round this very plantation. Do you want to see which of us is in the other's power, Miss Earle? If you do, sound this whistle."

And he drew from his vest pocket a small whistle of gold, set with diamonds, and offered it to her.

"No, my fair lady," he continued; "your watching last night was very ingenious, no doubt. You found out something, but you made the worst night's work of your life."

"What do you want here, then?" demanded Julia, turning a little pale.

"I did want only one thing," he answered. "It was my little Marguerite, who was stolen from me. She was my child-angel. In her I seemed to see my youth once more, the days when I was good and happy. Well, if it had not been for you, I should have taken her away, and left this Claude to you. Marguerite says you're fond of him. You would have lost a rival. Now I've changed my mind."

"And what will you do now?" she asked, shrinking back in spite of herself, before this singular man.

"Instead of one, I shall take two," he replied, a grim smile curling his mustache. "We Malay pirates are all Mahomedans, you know. You shall be the sultana of my harem. And as for your Claude, he dies to-day, for stealing Marguerite, and burning my palace."

Julia turned from white to the brightest scarlet in a moment. She trembled and her eyes sought the ground. The words of the Red Rajah were brutally plain, and she felt herself so utterly in his power. She had come out, triumphant and ready to torment him, meaning to warn him away, and allow him to escape at last.

Now the tables were turned. But was she to escape? While she stood confused, a second loud boom was heard. The Rajah laid his hand on her arm, and pointed seaward.

"The Palms" overlooked Singapore and the bay. There, out in the offing, the white sails of the squadron were to be seen, shining in the sun, as they pointed their bowsprit eastward, toward the hidden shores of mysterious Borneo.

"There goes the last of your friends," said the Red Rajah, sarcastically; "and here comes the first of my enemies."

As he spoke, the sound of horse-hoofs was heard, and the next minute a group of horsemen rode up the broad gravel sweep that led to Mr. Earle's house. Julia Earle was going to scream for help, but the Rajah checked her with a simple gesture. He held up the whistle.

"Be careful, girl," he said. "If you want to see them all killed in one half-minute, scream."

Julia was silent. "Now listen," he continued; "I am going away with these gentlemen. You may take it into your head to try to get to Singapore, and spread an alarm. Now let me warn you. There will be fifty men, lurking in this jungle, till I come back. They have orders to kill every living creature that tries to escape. It is quite an ugly weapon this knife, Miss Earle. Look at it. These wavy lines tear the flesh terribly. Every man will have one of them. I should regret to have you killed. It would pain me ineffably. But if you try to escape, it will happen. Try it, and you'll see them all killed before your eyes. A word to the wise. Now, farewell. I must go and see my friends."

The Rajah stalked off to the house, leaving Julia alone.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE TABOO TREE.

CLAUDE PEYTON was standing on the steps of the veranda with three other gentlemen. A group of native servants, holding several horses, stood on the gravel sweep outside. The white men were talking together when Don Gregorio approached them, and turned to meet him at once.

The don advanced leisurely, scanning the group as he came. They were all officers of Native Infantry in their dress uniform; and the brown case which one of them carried, proclaimed the surgeon.

Claude advanced to meet the don with a stately bow. His turn was coming, he felt. He could not be put down by this man's insolence any longer.

"Senor Claudio, I salute you," said Rodriguez, politely.

Claude bowed again; but so slightly, so frigidly, that the courtesy became almost an insult. Then he turned to the officers who accompanied him.

"Gentlemen," he said, "allow me to introduce to you Don Gregorio Rodriguez, a Spanish gentleman from Manila. He will join our riding party, at his own request. Don Gregorio, Captain Grey, Captain Manvers, and Dr. Brown. Captain Manvers has kindly consented to act as your friend, and show you the country."

Ceremonious bows from all the gentlemen.

"I am truly obliged to Captain Manvers," answered the don, speaking the broken English he affected in company.

The captain bowed again. He was a heavy Indian officer, renowned for his proficiency in "the code."

"Very happy, I'm sure," he answered, in a deep bass voice. "In these matters, I always believe in taking time by the forelock, gentlemen. The authorities have no time to interfere. Shall we get to horse? We can arrange our little matters on the way, you know."

It is surprising how punctilious a second becomes, on his principal's behalf, and how anxious to engage. But in this case both principals were equally anxious. Claude was completely exasperated; and the don was determined to have revenge for the loss the other had made him sustain.

"I agree with you, captain," said the Spanish gentleman. "Which of these horses may I ask is intended for me?"

Claude indicated the animal.

"I thank you, senor," said Rodriguez. Then he turned and called out:

"Muda! Muda!"

A little swarthy Malay came from the house, stealthily and barefoot. It was the don's servant.

The latter handed him a magnificent kris and a small gold-mounted revolver, with which Muda went into the house.

"Now, senores, camenos," said the don, gayly, swinging himself into the saddle, as he spoke; "let us depart. I am in your hands."

Five minutes afterward, Julia Earle, still sitting in the arbor, meditating over her singular position, saw the whole cavalcade sweeping down the broad gravel road, on their way to the jungle outside.

She started up, and hurried to the house, determined to alarm the servants at any hazard, and make some attempt to escape to Singapore.

We must leave her, to follow the "riding party." As soon as they were outside the plantation and entered the jungle, they turned to the left, and took a side road which led into the back country, along which they rode for some time.

Captain Manvers entered into conversation with the principals, as to the details of the coming duel. He was delighted with the readiness with which the Spaniard accepted his suggestions.

"Caro, senor," said Rodriguez; "you shall arrange them as you suit, I put myself in your hand. Well, then, you are my second, and you should I discommode myself till we are on de ground?"

"Don Gregorio," said the captain, "you are a man after my own heart, and it's a pleasure to act for you. I hope I may have that honor many a time, yet."

"Gracias, senor," returned the Spaniard. "You shall see get to the ground."

"I'll see to it," said Manvers. "Grey and I went out there about a month ago, when he shot Paddy Blake, of the Fusiliers. Paddy was a good fellow, Don Gregorio; but Grey sent him home invalided. It's a sweet little spot of ground for an affair. Just a nice distance for pistol-shooting, and the ground smooth as a billiard table. It's a pity you and our friend, there, didn't choose pistols, don. There's something so neat in popping a man over at ten paces."

"Eet is not our affair, senor," interposed the don, with a polite smile. "However, I think that we can manage to keel each other with de sword."

"I suppose so," admitted the captain. "Well, here we are, now."

As he spoke, Captain Grey, who rode with Peyton and the doctor at the head of the party, wheeled off sharply to the right, down a narrow jungle path, and in five minutes after the ground was reached.

As Manvers had said, it was a sweet spot for an affair. A cool, green, grassy glade, about a hundred by fifty yards, the ground smooth as velvet. A wall of tangled jungle, matted with twisting rotan, and encircling lofty teak-trees, shut in the little glade from intrusion. There was no human habitation within ten miles of the place.

"Now, then, Manvers," sung out Captain Grey; "where shall we put 'em?"

"Here, I think," responded the brother-officer. "Keep the horses back there, or the ground will be all cut up. Better dismount before we examine it."

The whole party accordingly dismounted from their horses, which were led off by the negro to the bottom of the glade. The two principals stood apart from the rest, buried

in their own thoughts. The doctor retired to a shady spot under a tree, where he opened his case of instruments, and examined them with the cold-blooded pride peculiar to his amiable profession. The two seconds inspected every inch of the ground, as carefully as if it had been a croquet-ground. They fell into little discussions over every lump on the turf, and finally went into raptures over one particular place, about fifty feet square.

"Such a place never was seen," protested Manvers, and Grey agreed with him.

Now they returned to the side of the glade where their principals stood.

"Come, gentlemen," said Manvers, briskly, "we're all ready for you now. Grey has the swords, which we have measured, and find correct. Will you be pleased to undress?"

Claude took off his coat, and handed it to his second, and the don initiated his examination. Vests followed, and then came the question of searching both parties for concealed armor, according to the practice in these little "affairs."

Peyton obviated the necessity in his own case for search, by stripping off his shirt, and standing there naked to the waist. The don preferred to retain his shirt apparently.

Now at last every thing was ready. The swords, light, thin blades, with keen points, were placed in the hands of the men, and they were conducted to the ground by their seconds.

The spot selected was admirably smooth. The seconds had even refrained from stepping on it, for fear of trampling the surface. Claude felt the elastic turf under his feet, and took the post assigned to him by Captain Grey.

Now, for the first time, the two men scanned each other closely, as they stood within ten feet.

The seconds retired, and watched their men.

"By Jove! They're a splendid match," whispered Grey to Manvers.

And so they were.

Both gentlemen were very nearly equal in height. The slight advantage possessed in this respect by the Spaniard, was balanced by the heavier frame of the young Virginian. Their faces were strikingly different in coloring, but similar in contour.

The florid complexion, brown hair and mustache of Claude, were contrasted with the dark pale face of the Spanish gentleman, with its intensely black hair and eyes. But their profiles were both high and aquiline, and their general appearance, when close together, was that of an "excellent match," as the captain said.

Don Gregorio and Claude advanced slowly and cautiously toward each other, and crossed swords.

In so doing, it seemed, for the first time, the Spaniard's eyes became fixed on Claude's breast.

There, tattooed in faint, blue marks, was the mysterious symbol of the serpent-circled tree.

No sooner did the don see the mark, than his whole demeanor changed. From a quiet, sneering, impassive gentleman, he suddenly became an astounded man, overwhelmed with some mysterious emotion.

Uttering a sort of cry of horror or terror, he sprang back several paces, and stood, shaking all over, pointing at Claude with his left hand.

He was as pale and terror-stricken as a man who had just seen a ghost.

Claude himself was astonished at the other's demeanor. Involuntarily his sword followed that of Rodriguez, and sunk to the earth, where the point stayed.

Don Gregorio turned a gray, ashy face on Captain Manvers, as he pointed with trembling finger to the young Virginian.

"Who is that man? What is his name?" he asked, in low, husky tones.

Captain Manvers was astonished and shocked. Such an outrage on dueling proprieties had never occurred in his experience.

"Confound it, man!" he answered, angrily, "you should have asked these questions before you crossed swords. Do you want to get out of a fight on the very ground? It can't be done, while I am your second."

The Spaniard appeared hardly to heed him. He turned to Grey, instead.

"Oblige me, sir," he said, hurriedly, and in perfect English; "what is this gentleman's name? I did not know it."

"I am at a loss to understand your question, sir," replied Grey, haughtily. "What is your object in asking it? I should recommend my principal to answer it with his sword. Manvers, I'm afraid Peyton has been trapped here and left with a bragging white feather." And the English captain's lip curled scornfully.

But Don Gregorio did not seem to heed either of them. He only caught the last name.

"Peyton, did you say?" he asked. "Is his name Peyton? They called him Claude."

Don Gregorio was in a strange state. He hardly seemed to be in his senses. He stared around him with ashy face, the drops of sweat pouring from his brow. But Peyton had recovered from his surprise. He saw in this, like the others, only an attempt to deprive him of satisfaction. He spoke himself now.

"My name is Claude Peyton, Don Gregorio Rodriguez. Claude Peyton it was whom you insulted last night; twice insulted, and most grossly. You can not do away with that, now. I can tell you. Raise your sword, and defend yourself, sir. My turn is come."

Don Gregorio turned round to him.

"If I had known who you were, sir," he said, in a low voice, but still with a sort of dignity struggling with his evident agitation. "I should not have said what I did. I entreat you to press this affair no further."

"It is too late, Don Gregorio!" said the other, fiercely; "do you think that you can call me a coward, without blood being shed? I begin to think that some one else is the coward. Defend yourself, quickly, or I'll run you through."

And he advanced fiercely on the Spaniard. Don Gregorio dropped his weapon and opened his arms.

"Stab, then," he said, quietly; "I will not fight you."

Claude Peyton trembled all over with passion.

"Heavens!" he cried; "how can I stab an unarmed man? Am I not a Virginian? Take up your sword, sir, or you are no gentleman. What! Are you to insult me, and then refuse me satisfaction except at the price of an assassination? Take up your sword, I say. You must give me satisfaction! You owe it as a gentleman, if you were my own brother. Take up your sword, I say!"

Don Gregorio stood looking at the other with a strange glance. Claude was boiling with passion. The two captains were stamping and cursing at each other. They were like the spectators at a prize-fight when one of the men has sold the fight. They were wild with rage. The Spaniard spoke at last.

"You have come from Virginia, Mr. Peyton," he said; "you know the rules of honor. I yield to you. I will give you satisfaction."

He stood looking at Claude for a moment more, with that strange look. Then he stooped, and picked up the sword, and stood on guard.

The Virginian attacked him at once, with all the skill in fence he was possessed of, and that was considerable. If it had not been, he would never have chosen the weapons he did.

But he found, to his surprise, that Don Gregorio's skill was greater than his own. His arm was like iron. Again and again did the Virginian try to pass the bright point, that remained confronted to him, slight-looking but formidable barrier.

That point kept quivering in small circles, and parried every thrust he made, the don standing like a bronze statue.

Captain Manvers rubbed his hands, and observed to Grey:

"Pretty shaky, things began to look—eh! Grey? But he fights beautifully now. Look at that figure!"

Claude was compelled to desist after a while, from pure exhaustion. Three times had he almost run on the don's point in his eagerness, and three times the light prick warned him back in time.

The Spaniard made no advance on his part, and both parties rested their points on the ground, by mutual consent.

"Your temper is too quick, Mr. Peyton," observed Don Gregorio, calmly; "you fence too fast, and expose yourself too much."

Claude frowned angrily, but made no reply. He kept his breath for the second round. Presently, he was sufficiently recovered to resume the fight. This time, he went slowly and cautiously to work. He had learnt enough of the Spaniard's skill to take his advice. He fought warily, and kept himself well covered. But with all his long-concentrated attacks, he could not puzzle the don.

Every lunge was parried, and that ugly-looking point was constantly arresting further progress, with the cool "stop-thrust." Claude grew wild as he grew weaker, and finally making a desperate lunge, slipped and fell to the ground.

But Don Gregorio never offered to molest him while he lay there. He simply drew back, and rested his sword on the ground.

Claude scrambled to his feet and stood panting. He felt inexpressibly mortified. His life had been in the Spaniard's power, and

Saturday Journal

Published every Monday morning at nine o'clock.

NEW YORK, JANUARY 27, 1872.

The Saturday Journal is sold by all Newsdealers in the United States and in the Canadian Dominion. Parties unable to obtain it from a newsdealer, or those preferring to have the paper sent direct, by mail, from the publication office, are supplied at the following rates:

Terms to Subscribers:

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ers, it holds with greater force with the great novelists, for the reason that each reader has time for asserting himself, and for mixing in the grains of allowance from his own personality, which essentially modifies the novelists' ideas or philosophy. President Porter has the novel to be emotionally excited, not to be impressed in reason, and the emotion, in most cases, is as effervescent as any other emotion, leaving not a shadow of conviction to mark its passage. The exceptions to this are just numerous enough to fortify the rule—that novel reading is a delicious mental pastime, not a mental training-school.

Current Publications.—We have drifting in upon us, numerous publications which give striking evidence of the rapid progress which the public is making in their appreciation of the arts and sciences, and in the amenities of life. In the various musical weeklies and monthlies, we have not only much excellent music for very little money, but a large variety of reading matter, eminently adapted for advancing musical taste and knowledge. They are, in fact, educators, and their combined circulation, which must be very large, is a gratifying evidence of the widespread interest entertained by our people in music and art. Among these publications may be mentioned:

Dexter Smith's Musical, Dramatic, Literary and Art Paper, Boston. Monthly. \$1.00 per year. Edited by Dexter Smith.

Orpheus, A Repository of Music, Art and Literature, New York and Boston. W. A. Pond & Co. \$1.00 per year.

The Folio, A Journal of Music, Drama, Art and Literature. Edited by Geo. Lowell Austin. Boston. \$1.00 per year.

The Song Journal, A Repository of Music and its Literature. C. J. Whitney & Co. Detroit. \$1.00 per year.

Another pleasant paper, indicative of the good taste of its community of readers, is the PEOPLE'S MONTHLY, Pittsburgh, Pa. \$1.50 per year. It is a folio about the size of Harper's Weekly, is beautifully illustrated, and edited with unexceptionable care. Every city in the land should foster at least one such home paper.

The Seedsmen are outdoing themselves in their Catalogues for 1872. That of Vick, of Rochester, is not only very beautiful as a book, but is one of the most admirable Floral Guides we have ever seen. No novice or amateur in flower culture needs any more perfect directory to the character, culture and quality of flowers, bulbs, runners, etc., than this compendious catalogue, which is supplied to all applicants remitting ten cents—about one-fourth of the first cost of the work. The more of such publications that are disseminated, the better.

Our Home and School Series of Books.—The encomiums bestowed upon our series of DIME DIALOGUES and SPEAKERS, and their immense sale, is a pleasing evidence of the intrinsic excellence of the little volumes. A letter before us from a School Principal in a leading city, says:

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PLEASURES AND PAINS.

No truer proverb was ever written than, "One man's meat is another man's poison," as the following lines will bear witness.

When the first fall of the wintry snow commences to deck the earth in its most beautiful covering, you will hear many looking forward to enjoyments throughout all the cold months. The merry sleigh-rides, where the horses seem to dance under the inspiring music of their bells; the warm buffaloes well wrapped around you; good stout overcoats to keep the body, and hand-cloth mittens to keep the hands from freezing, and may I add it? the girl of your choice nestling by your side. Why should you dread the winter?

Skating on the pond is another of those delights you think to revel in. The well-lighted pond—the hundreds of beaux and belles flashing here and there in their charmingly-setting costumes, looking to the bold more like fireflies than human beings. The notes of an inspiring band complete the scene; and while this entrancing pleasure is being enjoyed, one wonders to himself why should any one dread the winter?

In the old homestead all the dear ones are gathered around the blazing hearthstone, and listening to the many told tales of the days gone by, when grandfather had to do so much hard work to make a home West for his brood to live in; how the wild Indians used to prowl about the neighborhood, and almost scare grandmother out of her wits; how she was brave enough to throw a blazing torch onto a couple of dusky savages who demanded admittance to her hut. The fire burns so brightly; no fear of Indians disturbing the serenity of the scene; we again say, why should any one dread the winter?

Let us look at the other side: When the snow begins to fall, the poor do not think of sleigh-rides, or skating, or merry gatherings. They are obliged to think of the high price of fuel, of the many months they must work with benumbed fingers and shivering frames, to keep from starvation. It is no pleasure season for them. How can it be when we think of the many comforts, not to say necessary things, they are deprived of? What temptations are they not obliged to resist? They have to pass the markets and see the many tempting meats and poultry displayed, which they have no means of procuring. Who could wonder if they were wicked enough to wish that envy and theft were not sins?

The hilarity of the pleasure-seekers seems like a mockery to their ears, for laughter and delight are strangers to them.

If you possess the means to aid those in need of it, bear in mind that it is your duty

to do so. You are not asked to give up your own pleasures, but you are commanded to mitigate another's pain.

CORRESPONDENCE.

I THINK letter-writing may be classed among the Fine Arts. A good letter is a thing less frequently found than people with a limited correspondence imagine. We have numerous books on letter-writing, and "Chapters on the Art of Correspondence," but of what use are they to the person who writes you that they "take their pen in hand to let you know that they are well, and hope these few lines will find you the same," as some people have an especial talent for doing? There is a "few lines," indeed, the brilliant quotation comprising the whole of the letter, with, perhaps, the interesting addenda that "they have had a great deal of fine weather of late."

Oh, dear! I do not believe my good nature would bear the strain of a lengthy correspondence with such a person! I am afraid the "old Adam" would so far get the advantage of me that about the third epistle would go into the fire unopened. It is perfectly exasperating to receive a letter, and then find nothing inside the envelope save the intensely original matter referred to. I dare not believe there is any excuse for such stupidity in letter-writers. Why can not people write of what they do, see, and hear, in a lively, interesting manner, instead of sending such instruments of torture as some of them do? Many persons in places teeming with life and activity, with every thing about them to furnish food for thought, write absolutely nothing worth the reading, unless they chance to be near and dear enough to render even the bare information of their welfare of interest to us.

Such letters come at long intervals. It seems an undertaking greater than any thing else, to such correspondents to write a letter. They put it off from time to time, dreading to do it, though what there can be so tedious in writing a page of matter written so often as to be at the tongue's end, is difficult to imagine.

But, how pleasant are those letters which come to us from distant friends, full of interesting, though unimportant, news; chatty, sociable, humorous, and so natural in style, and so suggestive of the writer, as to almost bring him or her before us! With what eagerness we break the seal, recognizing the chirography, and peruse it again and again, and when we have read it so often that it is all in our minds, like Oliver Twist, we sigh for "more."

Bless such letters and letter-writers! It is to be regretted that there are not more of them. Good talkers are frequently poor writers. People say whatever of wit, logic, philosophy or thought occurs to them, but when seated with pen in hand and paper before them, they lose all naturalness of thought and expression, and either fill pages with mawkish sentiment, pedantically worded, or tie themselves down to orthodox commonplace concerning the state of the weather, real and apparent, adding, perhaps, valuable information as to the price of butter and eggs, and finish by saying "I must close," which they proceed to do immediately, much to your satisfaction.

Speaking of letter-writing, why don't folks write so that people won't have to be inspired to read it? Shakespeare is said to leave room for the imagination, but he is not the only writer who possesses that faculty.

LETTIE ARTLEY IRONS.

RECOLLECTIONS OF "ARTEMUS WARD," No. 3.

BY THE "FAT CONTRIBUTOR."

Mr. Griswold here continues his extracts of Ward's letters to him—some of which are of peculiar interest, as revealing the "Great Showman" as he was behind the scenes. The letters will add something to the biography of the man.

OFFICE OF VANITY FAIR,

No. 100 Nassau St.,

NEW YORK, Nov. 15, 1861.

"Dear Gris: I got your favor duly, and am very much obliged for your kindness in the matter of notices, etc."

"I have already over twelve hundred dollars worth of engagements, and they are coming in daily. The prospect now is that I will have all I can do at it during the winter. I open in New London, Conn., the 25th of this month. I tremble some, but not much. I go all over Boston, Portland, this city, Brooklyn, Toronto, Cincinnati, Chicago, Milwaukee, etc., etc. I'm in for it—go or 'bu't, and I hope it will be a 'go.' I think my lecture will be a success, if I can fire it off properly. My book will be out the last of next month. Rudd & Carleton, Publishers."

"This is the turning-point of my chequered life. I am literally going to make a big thing or 'write for the big thing and mean to fetch it. But we can't always tell; I only say that I expect success."

"I wound up 'Washyboshy' abruptly, to-day. The idea of writing a comic serial with a new book, and about forty lecture engagements, saying nothing about a somewhat nervous state of mind, might probably call a rose-tint to the cheek of a howling maniac. So I stopped the blamed thing. I shall probably go to Cleveland, by and-by, when I am easy on my pins. Or this hereafter."

"Tell Tom Stow (Foreman of Plain Dealer, and personal friend of Ward's) that pursuing a career of infamy may be profitable for a spell, but sooner or later it ends upon the gallows. The way of the half-penny is hard."

"Regards to —. Ask her if she knows of any fine healthy girl worth \$25,000, who wants a good home. I begin to feel like getting married. I think it would be better for my appetite."

"Write. Excuse me, sirs, for not sooner responding to your esteemed dispatch. In good sooth, my liege, I have been blamed busy, and haven't had time. Write right off. I am a beggared outcast, but I am, yours, ever,"

"DA. BROWNE."

ON THE WAR-PATH.

In a letter, dated "Fitchburg, Mass., March 26, '62," he writes:

"I am now going at the unprecedented rate of six nights a week, for a party who hire me and pay me promptly and liberally. Between ourselves, confidentially, I am tired of jamming over the country like a dern'd distracted comely, and I pay, and I shall 'continue' probably until the first of May. The houses are good, and my employers are making a good thing as well as myself. The sun shines, and I am making hay."

"B. B. honorable, and never despise a man because he wears a ragged coat. I can't say no farther than that."

"Faithfully, yours ever,"

"CHARLES F. BROWNE."

WARD INCHOLENCY.

BOSTON, JULY 30, '64.

"My Dear Gris: I am sorry I didn't have the chance to take you by the lily-white claw, the day you left New York. You know how busy I was with Hingston, and of course I need not apologize. I regret, though, I flow from the heart. Believe me. And go on in a glorious career. I will if you will."

Join me—you and Tom Kean and David Grey, [Editors of Buffalo Courier.—G.] in a glorious career! We can do it afterwards. Goddimit demands a glorious career of all of 'em! Bloomer is of it also. Indemnify 'em with any people you mingle of also. Bear these truths into mind. And stick to the old flag!"

"I've got my entertainment—Artemus Ward among the Mormons,—under good headway, and shall open in September, if there are no draft riots. Don't, for God's sake, put any first-rate notices into the papers about it, and send 'em to Carleton's, 43 Broadway."

"Yours, sincerely,"

"DAVID A. WARD."

In a letter recommending the writer as a correspondent to a New York weekly, he says:

"He is from the West, which has already given the world a Grant, a Cornell Jewett, a Valandigham, and a —"

"Yours, truly,"

"ARTEMUS WARD."

Foolscap Papers.

My Reception in England.

The reception of Alexis in America was a good deal like the honors which I received in England, on the renowned occasion of my memorable first visit there, some years since.

When I landed in Liverpool, all the bells in the city were rung for joy, making me feel greatly lifted up in spirit, and think that I was lucky in being me. It was Sabbath morning, yet that didn't prevent all the bells from being rung with a will. A great many fine carriages were at the landing, and their owners, who were lords, dukes, etc., with whips in hand, struggled manfully with each other for the honor of conveying me, and they were so anxious that in their excitement I was nearly pulled to pieces, and my swallow-tailed coat was torn up the back.

I was finally lifted into a carriage and driven off. I asked my noble driver if he wasn't a dunce. He said he was the Duke of Barouche, and asked me for a chew of tobacco.

I was obliged to lift my white hat often, and waft my umbrella to the people on the sidewalks, who, as it was Sunday, forbore to yell and throw their hats and bonnets up, walking leisurely along, highly excited, but very calm.

When I got to the hotel my neck was sore from bowing so much, and taking my carpet-sack, which contained my other pair of socks, and my other handkerchief, (which, although I had only worn them four weeks, were dark enough to make the customs' officer remark that there was a little too much American soil to be allowed to come into England without duty.) I was ushered into the hotel, told the host I was Whitehorn, shook hands with him, and was provided with an airy room on the fifth floor, as the host said I was the highest personage in the house, and nobody should be over me.

My boots were blacked by a nobleman's son. I asked him if he wasn't, and he said he was.

I shortly after received a note from my noble driver, the duke, stating it was the custom for great men to present the driver with something in the shape of a memento, for his children. I apologized in a card, and sent him ten dollars for his boys.

I kept my room all day, ordering the host to tell the great crowd of distinguished men who would be sure to come, that I was tired, and needed repose, and that I hoped they would make no public demonstration.

At night I attended church *incognito*, but was pleasantly surprised, on entering, to see the whole concourse rise to their feet, and burst out into a grand hymn, written for the occasion, beginning—

"Come, thou fount of every blessing."

I hadn't expected it. When the song was ended, and they had taken their seats, I arose with dignity, and said:

"People of England! From my most interior heart I thank you for this reception to your shores. I can't say that I deserve to be called the 'fount of every blessing,' but words fail me; God bless you."

I blew my nose, and sat down. This little heartfelt speech pleased them, and they all laughed. I was the center of all eyes.

The people were so anxious to possess something that had belonged to me, that when I got up in the morning I found they had even got into my room and taken my carpet-sack, boots, watch, and almost every thing I had. I thought in this matter they rather run things to extremes.

</

REMEMBRANCE.

BY CYRIL.

Forever past those halcyon days,
When all my soul in sweet amaze,
I dreamed life's fondest dream,
Ah! then my thoughts were all of joy,
The world, transfused, held no annoy,
As with I cleared the stream.

Oh, never shall I feather more
With such joy heart the merry oar,
Dripping with spray so bright,
And never more will setting sun
On cool, calm waters glimmer down,
With such a wondrous light.

No will the water lilies gleam
Upon the bosom of the stream,
So star-like and so fair;
For then they wore the faintest flush,
Of parting day's reflected blush,
Twined in my love's fair hair.

Ah, me! I dreamed my dream of love
While floating by the silent shore,
And dark eyes smiled in mine—
Dark eyes, bright eyes, so wondrous sweet,
Yet eyes well learned in all deceit,
That feigned a truth divine.

She showed how fair love's dream could be,
Bright worlds of joy she opened to me,
Till summer days once past,
A weary heart, crushed by deceit,
That never more would joyous beat,
She gave me back at last.

Oh, love that perished in its dawn!
Oh, peace forever lost and gone!
I can not come again.
Sweet moments passed, I little thought,
Remembrance with such grief was fraught,
That love held so much pain.

Vashti.

BY JENNIE D. BURTON.

RUBY TRENHOLM looked at her, half-
awed by the somber magnificence of the
place.

She had a passionate love for beautiful
things, and Ellet Hall opened to her a first
view of the luxuriant splendor of which she
had hitherto only dreamed. The wide,
paneled room, with its hangings of silk and
lace, the carpet thick and echoless; rugs that
were like masses of tropical bloom; and
couches and lounging chairs soft-cushioned;
pictures like bits of vivid life upon the
walls; etegres laden with bijouterie, and here
and there the gleam of marble through the
half-gloom pervading the place, were all
alike new and delightful realizations of her
longing fancies.

Vashti, gratifying her indolent propensi-
ties on one of the great easy-chairs, kept
watch of her from beneath drooping lashes,
evidently amused at the expression which
her own surroundings had created.

She fluttered her fan of soft, white fea-
thers and glittering spangles, and after a
moment, asked:

"Well, how do you like it? Can you be
satisfied here, Ruby?"

"Satisfied! It seems like a glimpse of
Paradise to me."

"Little enthusiast! I like you all the
better, though, for your sweet simplicity. It
is refreshing to chance across such a natu-
ral sunbeam."

"I do not think you can lack any of the
brightness of life," Ruby said, emboldened
by the other's graciousness. "I should
think it grand to be rich, and traveled, and
beautiful, like you."

Such a bitter thought flashed up into
Vashti's dreamy eyes, despite the smile upon
her lips, and her careless tone changed to a
mocking intonation which might cover
some feeling too intense to be lightly
touched upon.

"Did you ever hear of Dead Sea apples
that turned to ashes on the lips? or of
whited sepulchers, beautiful without, and
all loathsome within? Don't go to envying
me the attributes and possessions which may
not be desirable as you think. Come here,
child!"

Ruby came, silently.

"You think that my measure of content-
ment should be filled by all the splendid
trash which you see about me, and the soli-
tude that has gone to gratify my most
trivial desire. Yet I would give all this,
everything, for the single faculty which you
possess, and I lack. Does this appear
strange to you?"

"Very, for I can not think what you
should wish that is mine."

"Only your power of winning love.
Why, I even believe that you have touched
my heart, which I thought was completely
calloused. You'll find me worldly-wise, I
fear, and cynical."

"Only when you are unjust to yourself,"
Ruby asserted, almost wondering at her own
temerity and openness of speech. "Cer-
tainly, no one can help loving you if you
will it so."

A little triumphant laugh bubbled over
Vashti's lips.

"You are helping prove the theory I have
sometimes advanced, of being myself. I
think I am like a beautiful serpent—I can
fascinate, if I can not make people love me.
Do you think I can not see that you are
half afraid of me? Do you fear that I
should harm you, little dove? You, at least,
are safe from my wiles."

Ruby shrunk back, distressed and amazed.

"Indeed, I did not mean—I am quite
sure—" she faltered, and broke off short,
wide of the meaning she intended to con-
vey. To herself, she acknowledged that
Vashti was right; her admiration was mingled
with a kind of fear that was yet trust-
ing, so great was the influence of the
stronger nature over her weaker one.

"You did not mean me to read the truth
as plainly. There, never mind! I have
strange moods, sometimes, and you have
seen me in one of them. I am not really so
dreadful as I have tried to make you think,
and have no doubt that we shall suit each
other admirably."

"Shall I come to-morrow?" Ruby queried.

"Yes, at noon—not sooner. You'll find
me a dilatory mortal, beginning my days in
the middle."

Then Ruby went away through the
length of hall, with its floor of stained mar-
ble, laid in mosaic squares, and out into the
sunshine which flooded the balmy summer
air. Perhaps it was this which brought the
flush to her cheek, and sudden exuberance
to her spirit. Perhaps it was the sound of a
baritone voice tolling an old Scotch ditty,
mellow in its weight of love and trust.

Vashti heard it, too, and with a sudden
clenching of her hand above her heart,
crept stealthily to the screened window.
Such a white, hard look stole over her face
as she withdrew, and took up from a neigh-
boring etegere a tiny box, polished and per-
fumed.

"Here is my nepenthe," she murmured to
herself. "Why should I struggle to break
the charm when all else brings pain?"

Meantime, Ruby, on her way, met face to
face with the owner of the voice—Gerald

Fontenay, who was Mr. Ellet's agent and
private secretary. He broke off his song,
and held out his hand, taking hers in cor-
dial clasp.

"Ruby! You could not have dropped
from the clouds, for there are none in this
sky; but seeing you here is as great a sur-
prise."

"Don't let the fact continue so!" she
laughed, "or you will receive frequent
shocks. I am to come every day after this."

He turned, walking by her side down the
wide avenue to the lodge gates, while she
told him how simply this had come about.
Vashti had caught a sight of her pretty face
during one of her daily drives, and taking a
fancy to it, requested an interview at the
hall. This had resulted in a proposition that
Ruby should come at stated hours to
perform the role of companion toward the
heir of the broad Ellet possessions.

Gerald, Fontenay's sunny face clouded
over.

"I should be glad, I suppose, Ruby; yet
I dread to have you come here. Let my ad-
vice prevail, and don't do it."

"Oh, Gerald! Her griefed face told
him how keen her disappointment was. He
thought you would be pleased to have me
near you. I must come, though, for I have
promised."

"Pray Heaven, mine may prove a ground-
less misgiving, then. Since it is inevitable,
I will put away morbid forebodings. Oh,
Ruby, what should I do if harm should
come to you? Remember, you are my one
precious jewel."

And Ruby went on her way with the
consciousness of his love for her filling her
heart with a flood of happy thoughts.

On the morrow she entered upon her du-
ties at the hall. Herself open as the day,
it was not long before she felt that some un-
acknowledged restraint brooded constantly
over the place. Mr. Ellet was a grave, re-
served man, looking old and broken at an
age when other men are scarcely past their
prime, preoccupied in manner, and nervous
to a painful degree. Ruby was seldom
brought into contact with him, but her
bright, hopeful nature pined him, and she
was she that some dread care was ever
haunting him.

Vashti and she were fast friends, though
the former was still an unread enigma to
Ruby. A month of daily intercourse gave
her no more intimate knowledge of Vashti's
inner life than that first conversation which
I have chronicled.

Then one evening in early fall, when the
first touch of frost had dashed a tinge of
bright color in midst of the dingy green
from which the past hot days had drawn all
freshness, Ruby was detained at the Hall by
a sudden shower. It was night when the
rain ceased to fall, and the sodden ground
made the long walk to her home an impos-
sibility had it been otherwise.

"I will have James drive you home,"
Vashti said. Ruby wished that it might be
Gerald upon whom the duty should devolve.
It seemed that their personal proximity had
only served to raise a barrier in the way of
private intercourse; it was so seldom that
they could interchange other than common-
place greetings.

But James, the coachman, could not be
prevailed upon to execute the charge. One
of the horses had fallen lame, and the other
could not be safely driven alone, he averred.

Then you must stay over night," Vashti
said, with a shade of annoyance in her voice,
which Ruby could not detect. "I hope
you will not experience any serious incon-
venience."

"None at all," Ruby answered her. "Do
not be concerned regarding me; there is no
one to experience anxiety on my account."

It promised to be a red-letter occasion in
Ruby's existence when Gerald joined them
in the general parlor. Mr. Ellet, self-ab-
sorbed, lingered a while, and then withdrew
from the room. Vashti, for duty had
busied her hands with some complication of
soiled-laundered worsteds, that lay like a misty
cloud against the shimmering light of her
bright silken robe.

She was fond of the brilliant colors that
so well suited her olive skin and dusky hair,
and this night she sparkled like some rare-
plumed bird basking in tropic warmth. Her
eyes were fixed upon her work, her cheeks
and lips vividly tinged. Ruby, with her full
appreciation of beauty in its rarer type,
dwelt delightfully upon the picture she pre-
sented.

But even Vashti was forgotten when Ger-
ald leaned over her, whispering:

"Rejoice with me that our probation is
almost over. I am going to fetter you at
last, my precious one."

Something glittered in his hand, and he
slipped upon her finger a golden circlet set
with a single ruby that glowed like a heart
of living flame. Ruby touched it to her lips
with happy tears springing to her eyes.

A thrill of apprehension struck her as
some magnetic influence drew her gaze to-
ward Vashti. It seemed as if some glastly
counterfeit had usurped the place of the
gloving countenance she had observed so
shortly before. The soft, dreamy eyes were
glittering now, the face colorless and hard,
with drawn lines about the mouth.

That glastly brought a revelation to Ruby,
that made her heart ache with pity for the
pain she knew the other suffered. Vashti,
rising, with an effort recalled the bloom to
her face, and swept her shining robe across
the floor to where they sat.

"You must not think because Love is blind
that his presence carries the affliction with
it. Let me congratulate you both, since I
have penetrated your secret."

She held out her hand so quietly self-
possessed, that Ruby found herself wonder-
ing over the strange elements which mingled
in such a composition.

It was midnight, and the Hall lay darkly
silent. Ruby woke from a light slumber,
the first into which she had fallen, with a
shiver and a feeling of dread oppressing
her.

Her vague uneasiness deepened into a
sense of intense terror, as she fully awak-
ened. Vashti was leaning over her with such
a demoniacal expression distorting her
countenance, that Ruby lost power of
thought and action in her awful fear. A
night-lamp left the large room full of dark
shadows, but seemed to concentrate its rays
about those two.

Vashti stooped, touching the hand which
bore Gerald's ring. The ruby gleamed there
like a sanguine stain.

"It is blood," she said, in a hoarse,
strange voice. "His is too precious to be
shed; but to spill yours will be dearer re-
venge—it will be a keener blow than strik-
ing at his own heart. He could have saved
me from a fearful fate, and would not; he
shall reap his reward in sorrow such as he
has given me."

There was a glitter of steel in her up-
raised hand, and as Ruby realized her hor-
rible intention, the apathy which had bound
her gave way, and she uttered one loud,
long, piercing shriek. Then came a sense of
stinging pain, a sea of fire swam before her
eyes, and she lost herself in utter darkness.

Gerald told her the rest, after she had wa-
vered between life and death for weeks, and
her healthy young vitality at last had won
the victory.

Vashti was a slave to the drug opium.
She had inherited the taste from her East-
ern mother, and though every possible pre-
caution had been taken to preserve her from
parent's fate, the curse had fallen upon
her in even greater heaviness.

She was now hopelessly insane.

Her love for Gerald had awakened a hope
in Mr. Ellet's heart, that the former's influ-
ence might break the bond which nature
and habit had formed; and, unwisely, as the
result has shown, he prevailed upon the
young man to remain with them.

It was a dark episode in Ruby's life, but
when renewed health brought her perfect
happiness as Gerald's wife, she sorrowed
still over Vashti's mournful fate.

Laura's Peril:
OR,
THE WIFE'S VICTORY.

A STORY OF LOVE, FOLLY, AND REPENTANCE.

BY BARTLEY T. CAMPBELL,
AUTHOR OF "IN THE WEB," "OUT IN THE WORLD,"
ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.
DESERTED.

JOHN NEVIN was shocked when he came
over to Rockledge the next morning, and
found no one but Price there. The latter
had been left behind to close the house and
see that every thing was properly secured.

He was nailing up the avenue gate when
John tapped him on the shoulder with his
cane.

"What are you about, Price—nailing the
folks in—eh?"

"No; nailing the folks out," was the re-
ply, spoken with some difficulty, too, for
Price had a couple of nails between his
teeth.

"What do you mean, man?"

"Just what I say."

Price was eccentric when he could afford
to be, and this, unfortunately for John,
was one of those times.

"Were you told to nail the gate?"

"You don't suppose I'd do it, if I hadn't?"

"No. I never supposed you would do
any thing you could avoid," replied John,
tartly. "You waste no pains—not even to
be civil."

He pushed by the man and walked up the
path to the house.

When he had reached the colonnade he
heard Price shouting:

"There's no one at home—all gone to
Maryland, I tell you."

John Nevin paused. The truth burst up-
on him now.

He looked about him. Every thing was
so still and grave-like—not a leaf rustled
among the vines; the lace curtains draping
the drawing-room windows, hung limp and
spiritless; and even the canary, which used
to chirp in the hall so cheerfully, was dozing
on its perch, as if it had no heart to sing its
joyous roundelay since its beautiful mis-
tress had vanished and was not there to hear.

John Nevin felt very lonely. He would
have given a great deal to have heard that
bounding step and rippling laugh echo in his
ears at that moment. But, no; that was
impossible; and so he beat the vine-leaves
with his cane, and fell to wondering why
Laura had gone off so suddenly, without
even so much as leaving him a parting
word.

"But she was sick," he muttered, glad
to excuse her seeming neglect; "and felt bad
about that Rock affair."

He sighed; cast a lingering, yearning look
about him; thought of the few pleasant
hours he had spent there with her, and
walked slowly down the avenue, by the
bowled form of the old servant, and out onto
the open beach.

Roaming aimlessly up and down the
shore, with no companion but his thoughts,
and all the time brooding over his dis-
appointment, made John Nevin look sadder,
grayer than ever.

"Hello, John! what's up? You look like
the front entrance of an undertaker's shop."

It was Dalby, as gay, dashing, laughing as
ever.

John was in no mood now to entertain
one so lively and desirous of getting rid
of the artist, he said, simply:

"Do I?"

This did not check Dalby, though; he
was in one of his talking fits this morning,
and he rejoined:

"Yes, indeed, you do. I wouldn't say so
if you didn't. But the cause—my soul, the
cause of all this?"

Nevin smiled, but said nothing.

"There must be a cause," added Dalby,
"or there would be no effect. Now, that's cogent reasoning, ain't it?"

"Very."

"Well, now, I propose to trace the effect
to its source, and, if possible, lift this hide-
ous lump from your back. May I?"

"If you have nothing else to do," replied
John. "But I'd advise you to seek more
profitable employment. I'm a very dull
fellow, Dalby, as you will discover on in-
vestigation."

He was beginning to like George Dalby,
despite himself.

"Assertions are worth nothing, when un-
supported, and especially when arrayed
against facts," said the artist, in reply.

"You say you are dull; the facts prove you
are sharp. You never talk at random, as I
do; never tread on tender people's corns;
never make an effort to please the fair sex;
and yet, in view of all this, you are quietly
smashing hearts as if they were empty
champagne bottles, and making friends in
every quarter."

Nevin put up his hand: "A truce—I beg
a truce. You talk nonsense so fast that I
can't keep up with you."

"You deny the charges, then?"

"In toto—from Alpha to Omega."

"The charge of heart-breaking as well?"

"That, more than any."

Dalby drew a long breath and heaved a
mock sigh. "It's very strange."

"What is strange?"

"That a man can, without his knowledge,
fall in love with one woman, and have two
crazy after him."

John Nevin started. Dalby was treading
on unpleasant—ay, even dangerous ground,
but the latter's curiosity compelled him to
ask:

"Who are these two women? and who
am I supposed to be in love with?"

"Well," said Dalby, "just to freshen
your memory, I will mention names, though
I didn't think it was necessary. The woman
whom you love is Laura Robsart, sometimes
called the beautiful widow, and the woman
who love you are this self-same beauty, and
your charming cousin, Miss Alice Houston."

"How do you know this—that Alice
cares for me?"

The questioner was very calm, but his
tranquillity was superficial. He was re-
miniscent now of his engagement to his cou-
sin, an engagement which had grown to be
more of a memory than a fact, with him at
least—a vague, half-forgotten idyl of a—
it appeared to him at that moment—a very
distant youth.

"Ah! I see you confess to the first count
in the indictment. That is very frank, in-
deed, and I shall be equally frank with you.
The truth is, I guessed a part, and Miss
Lynn—Mabel, unwittingly dropped a hint.
This guess and hint I added together, and
by a simple yet ingenious trick, known only
to myself, and for which I claim the sole
credit of invention, I arrived at the result
—or fact, whichever you like to call it."

John Nevin smiled, a dry, peculiar smile,
and after a pause, added:

"And so, Mabel Lynn told you that cou-
sin Alice loved me, eh?"

"Well, no; not exactly that. She said
something about an old engagement be-
tween you and Alice, and that she knew
Alice liked you better than she did any one
else. But see—there goes old Col. Rowley,
and his niece, Miss Pollock. Let's join
them. I'll introduce you; nice people; live
out West."

"No, thank you," replied John; "some
other time."

"All right—sorry—good-by."

He was gone, and John Nevin thanked
his stars to be rid of him.

The battle-blinded fellow is clever, after
all," he said to himself, as he saw him offer
his arm to the stylish Miss Pollock, and
saunter gayly away. "Takes the world as
he finds it; loves art for the money that's
in it, and manages, on a few hundred dol-
lars, to be excessively happy."

Then John Nevin fell to thinking of that
old engagement to Alice, and to wondering
if she really cared for him, or desired to
have that ancient promise fulfilled.

He reached the Ocean House he
met Alice and Mabel. The women's faces were
met Alice and Mabel. The women's faces were
met Alice and Mabel. The women's faces were

"Is there an inn or hotel there?"

"I'm told there's a sort of a shabby affair,
kept by a man named Pittock. That will
do, I suppose."

"Bout a quarter of a mile—from that to
a half."

"Very good."

She arose, went to the cabin window, and
looked out on the bay; while Blaize strode
leisurely into the gentlemen's cabin, picked
up a copy of the Baltimore Sun, and was
soon deeply absorbed in the details of an
wrestling match which had taken place there
day before at Old Point Comfort.

The Daisy reached Sydneytown at six
o'clock instead of five, and the sun was set-
ting when Mrs. Rook and Sam Blaize turn-
ed their backs on the port, and walked up
the only street the town could boast of, al-
though now, when I come to think of it, it's
hardly possible that such a forlorn old town
as this ever boasted of any thing.

Some of the houses had been painted
white and some red, but the storms of
twenty years which swept in off the wide
bay, and over the town, had carried away
the colors and left the fabrics all of one
hue—a dull, ugly, monotonous gray.

"It's a run old hole," remarked Blaize, as
he gazed up at the frame church, the open
steeple of which disclosed a rusty bell.
"Seems to me if I wanted the world to
forget I was alive I'd come to Sydneytown."

"Yes, it's a very ancient-looking settle-
ment," answered Mrs. Rook. "But, where
is the hotel?"

"Can't say for that. Better go ahead till
we find one."

They came to it at last. It was called the
Calvert House, and had a great swinging
sign before the door representing the found-
er of Maryland, in a cocked hat, trimmed
with a poor imitation of real lace, a pro-
fusion of powdered hair, and a rather dam-
aged-looking crimson coat. The building
was a two-storied affair, with a long porch
in front and a battalion of dormer windows
on the mossy roof. There were two doors;
one wide, the other narrow. The former
led into the bar-room; the latter, through
cortines, was called the "Ladies Entrance,"
and opened into a dim, plainly-furnished
sitting-room.

Calvert Pittock, the proprietor of this es-
tablishment, was a little round man, with a
Falstaffian physique and a bald head. He
was a pleasant person; always had a smile
for a customer, and was shrewd enough to
change just as much as his guests would pay
without grumbling.

He was all in a flutter of delight when he
ushered the travelers into the parlor and
ordered the black servant to prepare a room
for the lady.

"How long do you intend stopping in
Sydneytown?" he asked.

"As to that I could not say yet," answered
Sarah Rook. "Probably a day or two."

"Ah! yes; not on a long visit, then; merely a flying trip from—"

He paused and looked inquiringly at
Blaize.

"From Baltimore," added Mrs. Rook.

"Just so! just so! From Baltimore, eh? Beautiful city; delightful trip down the bay."

He was straightening the table-cloth, and
dusting the stiff-backed wooden chairs, as he
made these remarks.

"Do you know where Robsart Place is?"
questioned Mrs. Rook, after a moment's
silence.

"Oh, bless your soul and body, yes; of
course I do. I have lived here in Sydney-
town these three-and-twenty years. Come
down from Annapolis here. Used to live in
Washington; saw Jackson inaugurated. Yes,
m'am; I've seen a good deal of the ups
and downs of this world."

Mrs. Rook smiled at the boastful words.

"I presume you have, but how far is it
from here to Robsart Place?"

He stopped dusting the chairs, looked
down at the floor a minute, pursed up his
lips, and while he drew a very red lid over
a very watery blue eye, replied: "Well, let
me see. Go in a hack?"

"No."

"On horseback?"

"No; I'll walk."

"Ah! afoot—eh? Then your best way
is through the woods. There's a path from
my back door leads directly there. The
roadway is almost a half-mile fair measure-
ment, but the path cuts it down to a quar-
ter and a fraction."

"Thank you."

"You're perfectly welcome," answered
Calvert Pittock. "I always tries to oblige
my customers; it makes things pleasanter
around."

He smiled blandly, bowed, and left the
room.

"When are you going over?" asked
Blaize.

"After dark," was the reply.
(To be continued—commenced in No. 95.)

The Dark Secret:

OR,
The Mystery of Fontelle Hall.

BY COUSIN MAY CARLETON.

CHAPTER XXI.
"HE GIVETH HIS BELOVED SLEEP."

"Lord Heron dwells in his castle high,
Roaming sleeps on the moor below,
He loved to live, and she loved to die;
Which loved the truest, the angels know."

Blaize.

MR. DE VENE arose and made a gesture, as
if casting something from him.

"It is gone—so is she, and peace go with
her! Frank, is dinner ready?"

"I don't know; and, what's more, I don't
care!" howled Frank, wiping his eyes and
nose, furiously, in his grief.

"Francis!" exclaimed his uncle, in angry
displeasure.

"I don't, then—not one bit! You treated
Jack shamefully, and I don't care if you
turn me out of doors for saying it. I'm
blamed if I don't go, anyway! I'll run off
and go to sea—I'll enlist! You see if I
don't! You had no business to treat Jack
so!" said Frank, with another howl.

"Francis!"

"Going and believing that old lying Griz-
zle Howlet, and ready to swear to every
thing she said, and snapping up Jack with-
out giving her a chance to say a word for
herself! I say it's a shame! I blamed
himself! And if I had known that was what
you wanted of her, I shouldn't have gone
one foot; no, not if you were to hang, draw,
and quarter me for it!"

"Francis!"

"I don't believe she ever did one single
thing that you said she did—only she was
too proud to deny it, when she saw you be-

lieve that hateful, old, ugly Mother Howlet faster than her," vociferated Frank, ranting furiously up and down the room. "And that old scoundrel, Nick Tempest, too, going and saying she was his daughter—the old villain! I should like to know what everybody will say when they hear how you've treated her, and turned her out of doors. I should think you would be ashamed ever to show your face again, Uncle Rob!"

"Francis!"

"Oh, you may 'Francis' as much as you like; but I don't care! I will say just what I think, if you were a dozen uncles ten times over. I suppose people think boys ought to sit with their fingers in their mouths, and never say a word, just because they are boys, as if they could help that! I tell you, Uncle Rob, if I was you, I would be ashamed ever to show my face again! And you a justice of the peace, too! A pretty justice of the peace you are, aiding and abetting robbers and murderers!"

"Leave the room, sir!"

"I'm going to, and the house too, if you like; and I will say again and again that it was a shame!"

"Will you be silent and leave the room?"

"I'm a-going to; but I say again and again, it was a shame! It was a shame—there! It was a shame—there! It was a shame—there!"

Mr. De Vere sprang up in a rage, collared the intrepid Frank, and shook him till he was breathless.

"Now, will you say it?" he exclaimed between his teeth.

"It—wa-a-s a sh-a-me, there!" said Frank, between his chattering teeth.

Mr. De Vere seized the bell-cord, and rung a peal that brought up Reynolds.

"Here, Reynolds, take this fellow off, and lock him up in his room, and bring me the key."

Mr. Reynolds, who would have manifested no surprise, and would probably have obeyed without a word, if his master had told him to behead him, blandly seized Frank, and began dragging him off, while that young gentleman kicked and struggled manfully. But kicks and struggles were of no avail, Reynolds was getting the best of the battle.

"It was a shame—there!" yelled Frank, as Reynolds pulled him through the door.

Orrie, who saw something exquisitely ludicrous in the whole scene, gave vent to a shrill peal of laughter at the youth's discomfiture.

"Dinner is served, sir," said another servant, throwing open the door.

"Very well! Augusta, will you take my arm?" said her father, rising.

But Augusta spoke not—moved not.

"Augusta!" he said, in alarm.

There was no reply.

He went over, lifted her head, and saw the closed eyes, and corpse-like face.

"Good heavens! she has fainted!" he cried in consternation. And once more seizing the bell-rope, he pulled it, as if he would have torn it down.

Two or three servants answered the summons.

"Bring water, salts, hartshorn, some thing, any thing, every thing! Miss Augusta has fainted!"

They fled to obey. Restoratives were applied, and in a few moments the large, heavy eyes unclosed, and fell on her father's face.

"Are you better, my darling?" he said, bending over her.

Her eyes wandered around in a vague, wild way.

"Oh, papa, where is she?"

"Who, my love?"

"Jacquetta! Oh, papa! It was dreadful!"

"Leave the room!" said Mr. De Vere, sternly, to the curious servants, who reluctantly obeyed.

"Papa, what have you done to her?" she cried, starting up.

"She is gone, Augusta! She will never come back more."

"Papa!"

"I regret the necessity as much as you can possibly do, Augusta; but justice must have its way. She has been weighed in the balance and found wanting."

"And you have turned her out of doors?"

He turned crimson.

"I could no longer keep her here with respect to myself, my daughter!"

"Poor little sister!" said Augusta, bitterly. "This is the return we have made her for all her love! Poor little Jacquetta!"

"She was guilty, Augusta!" said her father, sternly. "She carried a false heart under that fair face. Let us speak no more of her. Dinner is waiting."

"Excuse me, papa. I do not feel well, and would rather go to my room."

"Whatever you wish, my dear," he said, calmly. And she passed from the room without a word.

"No; you shall not go!" said his uncle, firmly, "until you tell me what this means. Is it because she, Ja—"

"Excuse me, sir!—I do not care for hearing that name again."

"Is it because she is gone?"

"Not because she is gone," he said, coldly, "but because of the way she went."

"She was guilty?"

"She may be. You ought to know best, since you have known her longest."

"And she did not deny it?"

"Well, so you told herself."

"Pardon me—I think she did!"

"Well; what matter?" said his uncle, impatiently; "she was guilty, none the less. So I could not act otherwise than I have done."

"I do not presume to criticise your conduct."

"Yet you are angry. Why is it?"

"I have been deceived—that's all," said Disbrowe, quietly.

"Deceived?"

"Yes, sir!"

"How?"

"The person I was led to believe your daughter, my cousin, and a young lady, turns out to be a wife, a mother, and the daughter of one whom she herself justly called the greatest villain unhung!"

"Do you love her still?"

"Excuse me answering that question, and allow me to bid you, once more, farewell."

"You will go?"

A bow was his answer.

"I have acted for the best, and yet you all turn against me. I loved her myself, and yet, because I obeyed the command of justice, I am looked upon as a monster."

"Charity is as great a virtue as justice."

"Good-by, Alfred."

"Farewell, sir."

They shook hands, but how cold and quiet one hand was!

Disbrowe turned to quit the room, and his uncle sunk into a chair and buried his face in his hands. A child's shrill scream echoed through the house, and little Orrie was clinging to him, wildly.

"Oh, don't go!—stay with me!"

He stooped and put his arm around her.

"You must be quiet, Orrie, and let me go—I can't stay."

"Well, take me with you, then?"

"No, I can not do that, either. You must stay here. If you cry, now, I shall not like you. Will you be quiet?"

"Yes," sobbed Orrie.

"Then, good-by! Now let me go."

He kissed her tenderly. "For her mother's sake," he said, gently; and then he let her go, and quitted the room.

He ordered his horse, and in a few moments was in the saddle, and galloping away, as if the arch-fiend himself was after him, toward the Mermaid Inn. He knew he would hardly reach it that night; but he would almost as soon have passed it in a wolf's den, as under the roof from which Jacquetta had been expelled.

How he thought, and thought, as he rode along, until thought became agony, and he dashed over the ground like one mad to escape from himself. He felt sure that they had taken her to the lone inn, and he was glad that it would be dark long before he reached it, so he would not be obliged to look even on the house that held her. Not for worlds would he have looked on that fair, bright face again—not for ten thousand worlds would he have touched that small, white hand it had once been such happiness to hold. He tried to shut out the "haunting shape, the image gay," that flashed before him in all its beauty, as if in deriding mockery, until his very brain reeled. He dashed and plunged furiously along through the deepening night, almost mad with impatience to reach the Mermaid. There was a possibility of his meeting Captain Nick Tempest there, and a diabolical determination filled his heart that one or the other should leave it a dead man. The Spanish boy, too—he felt as if it would be a direct mercy from heaven to twist his neck for him; and, in his present savage mood, he could have done it without remorse.

The daylight faded, and faded, behind the western hills, and the holy calm of a soft spring night settled over moor, and forest, and flowing river. Up rose the "young May moon," serene and silvery, smiling down like an angel-face on the young rider dashing along the lonely road at such a frenzied pace. There was something of heaven in the holy hush and drowsy calm of that peace stole into the passion-tossed heart of the young Englishman. He looked up, at the face of the serene sky, where the serene moon sailed, and reverently uncovered his head, awed by the deep, solemn beauty of the pale, bright night. The cool breeze lifted, lightly, the clustering locks of his dark hair, and calmed the feverish brow beneath, until his high heart-beating subsided, and he rode along in a subdued and decidedly more Christian mood.

The eastern sky was ablaze with the crimson and gold heralds of the coming morn, when the tired horse and rider halted at the door of the Mermaid Inn. Every thing was profoundly still, the shutters closed and the door barred, and its master far in the land of dreams. But our impatient young Briton cared little what brilliant visions of princely custom Old Bob Rowlie was indulging in; and, with the butt end of his horsewhip, knocked furiously at the door in a way that might have awoken the dead.

Ten minutes elapsed—during which Disbrowe kept up a steady cannonade at the door, until there seemed some danger of his beating it down altogether; and then an upper window was opened, a red woollen night-cap protruded, and a startled voice demanded who was there.

A tired traveler. How long do you intend to keep me waiting here? Come down and open the door, you old villain!"

Thus civilly apostrophized, Mr. Rowlie drew in his head, shuffled down stairs, and blinking very much, held the door open for his early customer to enter.

"Where is my horse to go? See that he is attended to directly; and let me have a bed as soon as possible. I feel completely used up."

Old Bob led the way up-stairs to a small hole in the wall containing a bed and a chair, and informed Disbrowe it was his "best bedroom."

"Oh, it will do well enough," said the young man, casting a careless glance around. "See that my horse is well cared for and carefully rubbed down."

"Mister—Robert—Edward—Rowlie, general dealer in lickers and refreshment for man and beast."

"Well, Mr. Robert Edward Rowlie, how many other guests have you at present in the house?"

Mr. Rowlie looked severely at the bed-post nearest him a moment, in deep thought, and then shook his head.

"We hain't got any at this present; no—not any. It's quiet here—remarkably so."

"So I should say. But there was one—Captain Tempest—is he not here?"

Mr. Rowlie looked with increasing severity at the bed-post again, until he had sufficiently collected his faculties to reply.

"No, sir; he ain't here—leastways, just at present; no—he ain't."

"Do you expect him soon?"

"Well," said Mr. Rowlie, scratching his head, or, more properly speaking, his night-cap, there ain't no saying about that. He might, and then again he mightn't."

"Well, what do you think?" said Disbrowe, impatiently. "Do you think he will come to-day?"

"Well, now, I really couldn't say," said Mr. Rowlie, with a look of helpless distress. "There ain't never putting any dependence onto him. He might, and then again—"

"He mightn't," interrupted Disbrowe. "Perfectly satisfactory! There, you may go now, my intelligent friend; but, should he come, will you just have the goodness to present him Captain Disbrowe's compliments, and let him know he hopes to have the pleasure of horsewhipping him within an inch of his life the first time they meet. There—go! I'm going to sleep."

To have seen the expression of Mr. Rowlie's expressive countenance on hearing this sanguinary announcement, with his mouth and eyes opened to their widest extent!

A faint smile broke over Disbrowe's face as he waved his hand for him to go; and the horrified host of the Mermaid took his departure accordingly.

The miserable night he had passed, and the high noon before Disbrowe awoke. There was no such thing as a bell in his room; so, hastily dressing and running his fingers through his hair, he glanced in a facetious little looking-glass, cracked across the middle, which ornamented the wall, and, possessing a strong natural taste for the ridiculous, reflected every feature askew. Having, by the aid of this dissolute mirror, twisted his shirt-collar hind side before, in the belief that he was thereby putting it on straight, he descended the stairs and passed into the bar, where he found Mr. Rowlie in the depths of a leather arm-chair, solacing himself with his pipe and a mug of frothy home-brewed.

"Morning, squire!" was his sententious greeting, accompanied by a patronizing nod.

"Good-morning, Mr. Rowlie. Have you seen to my horse?"

"Yes," said Rowlie, meditatively—"yes; I have."

"Well, I will go and have a look at him myself; and, meantime, send up some warm water to my room, and let me have breakfast."

Mr. Rowlie having promised obedience, Disbrowe sauntered out to see after Saladin; and having found that amiable quadruped pretty comfortable, returned to finish his toilet and take his breakfast; for being "crossed in love," as the housemaids call it, seldom interferes with a man's appetite.

The meal being served in the kitchen, and he having waited on by little Mrs. Rowlie, whom he found to be much more communicative and intelligent than her spouse, he proceeded to cross-examine her on matters and things—rightly concluding he stood a better chance of obtaining an answer from her than her solemn spouse.

"And so, Captain Tempest, left here yesterday morning," he was saying. "Did he tell you where he was going?"

"Oh, Lor! no, sir; he never tells nobody his business; but I expect it was something or other 'bout Grizzle Howlet. They're as thick as pickpockets, both of 'em."

"Have you any idea when he will return?"

"Well, now, I couldn't say exactly, but it ain't impossible he might come to-day or to-morrow, at furthest. His men are waiting for him out there in Rowlie's Cove."

"Where is that?"

"Just a small piece below; and it's always been called after us."

There was a boy with him—a young Spaniard. Do you know anything of him?"

"Oh, that uncommon handsome little fellow! No; he hasn't been here for a long while now. I asked old Nick once when he was, and he told me he had gone to the—"

"You know who; but I don't believe a word of it. He was a great deal too good-looking," said Mrs. Rowlie, laughing.

"Do you know if there is any chance of my getting a passage shortly in some craft going from here direct to New York?"

"Oh, less you! Yes, sir. Day after to-morrow, Bill Briggs comes down in his wood-boar, and he would take you. You wouldn't mind going in a wood-boar—would you?"

"Mr. Rowlie, doubtfully."

"Oh, certainly not. It does not matter. Well, I suppose there is nothing for it but to wait. Is there any one here I could send to Pontefract for my luggage?"

"My neevy will be here in the course of the day; he could go."

"Very well; send him then. By the way," he said carelessly, as if the thought had struck him for the first time, "can you tell me what this Captain Tempest trades in as he goes cruising around the world?"

Mrs. Rowlie glanced fearfully over her shoulder, as though she expected to see the burly form of the captain there in person, and answered, rapidly:

"I don't know, I'm sure; I hain't the least idee—not the least idee—not the least. He never brings nothing up here—leastways, nothing I ever see—so I really couldn't say."

"Do you know if he was ever married?"

"No, sir. Lor, how should I? I ain't more than three or four years since I seen him first, altogether, and he had no wife then that I ever heard of. He might be married a dozen times, though, for me."

"How came he and this old Grizzle Howlet to be so intimate?"

"Don't know; 'cept that it is that birds of a feather flock together everywhere."

And this child who lives with that old woman—little Orrie—do you know any thing of her?"

"No, sir—not a thing. I've heard she was the old woman's grand-darter, but I don't believe that, somehow. My opinion is, that that there old Grizzle ain't no better than she ought to be."

"You might swear that without fear of

perjury, my worthy hostess. Have you any thing here I can read to kill time this long day?"

"Yes, sir," said Mrs. Rowlie, departing with alacrity; and presently re-appearing with the whole library of the Mermaid, placed it on the table beside him.

There was the Pilgrim's Progress, Watts' Hymns, the Melodies of Mother Goose, and Robinson Crusoe, with the beginning and end torn out. Disbrowe smiled slightly at the attractive catalogue; and, lighting a cigar, leaned back and tried to beguile time alternately reading Watts' Hymns and Mother Goose.

That long day seemed endless in the dull Mermaid. No one came the livelong day except the "neevy" of Mrs. Rowlie, who was immediately packed off in a horse and gig to Pontefract for the young soldier's luggage. Half a dozen times Disbrowe started up in desperation, resolving to mount Saladin and ride to the old inn and see Jacquetta once more, in spite of them all, and as often checked himself, and paced up and down the little room like one insane.

Night came, and brought with it a calmer mood; but it was a night spent in feverish dreams. And he arose next day more restless and miserable than before.

Toward noon this feeling of restlessness grew unsupportable; and, unable to remain inactive longer, he ordered out Saladin, sprung into the saddle, and dashed off in the direction where his heart had been since he left Pontefract. In less than half an hour, the old inn came in sight, looming up dark, and dismal, and forbidding in the solitary waste. No one was in sight, but a horse stood at the door, which he recognized immediately as the one he had often seen Frank ride. Could it be that Frank was there? As he started forward to see, the door opened, and Frank himself rushed out, like one crazed, bare-headed and frantic, and was in the act of mounting and galloping off, when Disbrowe's voice arrested him:

"Hallow, Frank! Good heavens! what is the matter?"

He might well ask; for in turning round, Frank disclosed a face so wild and haggard, and eyes so full of passionate grief, that it sent a thrill of nameless terror to his heart.

"Oh, Frank! speak and tell me what has happened! Is she there?"

"Who?"

"Jacquetta."

"Yes," said Frank, in a tone of passionate bitterness, "she is there. Will you come in and see her?"

"Yes; come with me."

Both were on their feet in an instant and Disbrowe was white with apprehension.

"Come, then," said Frank, "and see the result of their work. You may all be proud of it alike."

"Frank! Frank! What do you mean?"

"You will soon see. Come!"

He led the way into the long, high kitchen, and a strange, nameless horror was thrilling through the heart of Disbrowe.

Captain Nick Tempest sat gloomily scowling by himself, and neither moved nor spoke as they entered. Old Grizzle sat at the other end of the room, dark and sinister as usual, and glanced at them with a malignant smile as they came in—but did not speak. The door of a small room opening off the kitchen lay ajar, and passing into this, Frank made a sign for Disbrowe to follow. There was a bed in the room, and under a white sheet was the dreary outline of something that made Disbrowe reel as if struck by a blow.

Without a word, Frank pulled down the sheet, and pointing to what lay stark and white there, said, huskily:

"Look! there is Jacquetta!"

He looked. The small, delicate form was stiff and rigid—the bright, sparkling eyes were closed in their last sleep—the short, flowing curls lay in lifeless clusters on the pillow. The sweet, beautiful face would smile on him no more. Jacquetta lay there, and dead!

(To be continued—commenced in No. 87.)

The Flaming Talisman:

OR,
THE UNFULFILLED VOW.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.,
AUTHOR OF "THE BLACK CRESCENT," "ROCKWINK-
ETC., ETC."

CHAPTER XXV.
GERARD HENRIQUEZ UNMASKS.

"I have searched my soul within,
And find naught but pride and—'earn.'"

"And find naught but pride and—'earn.'"

"The passions of the mightiest shell
That ever rapt the choir above,
We'll all too weak and cold to tell
The warm extravagance of love."

As Orle Deice descended the stairs, to admit her expected lover, the door of a room near the apartment she had just left, slowly opened, and a shadowy figure glided after her.

As the specter-like form passed the window at the head of the stairs, where the dim light of the stars shed an uncertain glimmer, we see that it was Meg Semper.

Her head was just twice its natural size; on the scarred and blotted face dwelt a mold of feature that was ferocious; in one hand glistered the knife she had sworn to sheathe in the bosom of the beautiful girl.

Where was Nemil? How had the hag escaped his vigilance, when he had promised to keep close watch upon her? We shall see anon.

Orle must have felt the presence of danger, for, as she groped in the darkness of the hall below, she clutched her sharp dagger; as if preparing to repel the attack of an enemy who lurked, unseen, near her.

But, she reached the door, and threw it open. A man stood upon the steps.

"Reginald," she said, lowly.

"It is not Reginald!" exclaimed a familiar voice.

"Herwin Reese!" the name was stammered forth in surprise, and she retreated before him as he entered.

"Yes, it is I—Herwin Reese."

Closing the door after him, he took hold of her wrist, and started to grope his way up the stairs.

"Unhand me, Herwin Reese."

"I fear to," was the significant response. "You might elude me."

"Elude you?"

"Yes; run from me and defy me."

"You speak and act in riddles. Explain yourself."

"Come with me, and see. I want to talk with you."

Hardly knowing why, she permitted him to lead her, without further remonstrance, and his hold perceptibly tightened as he ascended to the second story.

Conducting her to a side room, he closed

and locked the door, and withdrew the key—just as the crouching, skulking form of Meg Semper approached to within a few feet of them.

On the mantelpiece was a lamp, and this he proceeded to light.

He no longer wore the disguise which had enabled him to be near Reginald Darnley, and, as Gerard Henric, to plot the young man's ruin; but, with his smooth face and tasty attire, he stood before her, and for a few seconds contemplated her in silence.

"I do not understand this. Unlock that door, sir!" Orle said, at last, in an imperative tone.

Reese smiled grimly and retained his position, while his eyes were riveted burningly upon her.

"Will you unlock that door, sir?"

"No," calmly—so calm that it thrilled her indefinitely.

She felt strangely, now, in this man's presence. There was that in his manner to cause her much uneasiness. Not for a moment did his gaze turn from her, and his silence added to the gloom which gradually crept round her heart.

"Herwin Reese"—she drew herself up and returned that gaze with a flashing glance—"if you have nothing to say to me, let me depart. You look at me, as if you had never seen me till now. Why did you bring me here?"

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"Ha! ha! ha! ha!"

"Orle Deice!" He advanced toward her, with hand outstretched.

"But, quickly recovering from her mysterious outburst of humor, she waived him back.

"Keep off! Don't dare to approach me! You ask me what I mean?—ha! ha! ha! I am laughing at you, Herwin Reese; it pleases me to know that your foul scheming has been in vain! Your game has been blocked by a kind Providence. Ha! ha! ha! ha!"

"Orle Deice!"—if it were possible for a man to foam at the mouth, then Reese was in that condition.

Suddenly her manner sobered, and she said, with marked emphasis:

"I left Richmond a day later than Reginald Darnley. I saw Mervin Darnley on the street the evening of my departure, and he was as well as you or I! Now, what think you?"

He started back. This was unexpected, and, to him, impossible. He asked himself if she spoke the truth.

"Do you not mean it? You will see, ere long, whether I speak the truth."

"Ay, but I do! Wait! You will see, ere long, whether I speak the truth."

Just then there was another summons at the front door, and an expression of inquiry dwelt in the face of Herwin Reese.

Orle smiled.

"Unlock the door, sir,"

"Do you know who that is?" he asked.

"Yes; it is Reginald Darnley."

"Perdition catch him! He is here to see you."

"What else could bring him? Unlock the door at once, lest I raise my voice in a cry for help. If he hears me, he will force his way in here, and you know well enough he is no coward."

Reese strode to the door and swung it open. Orle lost no time in gliding out.

When alone, the villain strode to and fro, with folded arms and bowed head, reflecting upon what he had heard.

He could not understand or imagine how it was possible that the poison should have failed to destroy Mervin Darnley. It was a subtle, deadly drug, which Meg Semper herself had compounded, and when he had received it from her, it was with the assurance that, once administered, no antidote on earth could counteract its effects.

"Has Reginald Darnley so completely deceived me, after all?" he muttered. "Can it be, that he did not put the stuff into the ale? No—yet it is perplexing to me; I can not account for it. I know Orle would not have spoken so confidently, had there been any doubt about it. I am in a maze, and the cloud upon his brow grew darker, as he stood there thinking, marveling, conjecturing.

CHAPTER XXVI

NOT YET! NOT YET!

"Hate's slime her bosom nursed! Not knew the wits The wherefore of an act in mischief made."

—ANON.

AGAIN Meg Semper followed after Orle Deice with ghost-like stealth, as the latter started to answer the second summons at the front door.

From the lips of the hag came a gibbering sound that was smothered to an incoherent articulation, and then she muttered, in a whisper that resembled the silvery hiss of a serpent:

"This time!—this time! I'll be sure to do it now! She's doomed! She shall die! I'll have no more of the 'curst' Talsiman! My knife is newly sharpened for 't! So, they thought, to make me a prisoner, eh? Ha! ha! I know I'm mad! but I've not forgot my cunning. Oh! my cunning!"

Orle Deice dreamed not how near death hovered, as she moved along the dark passage of that deserted house.

When the girl threw open the door, it was to meet the embrace of her lover.

"Reginald!"

"Orle! My queen!"

A fervent kiss accompanied the embrace, when, extricating herself from his passionate caresses, she led him to the room where Cecilia, in a suspense that is indefinable, awaited the interview which was to contain so much of import to her future.

When the two entered the apartment all was still, a weird fascination seemed to hover in its atmosphere.

"Once more, Orle, my beautiful, beautiful queen! Once more the sweet meeting of old!"

"And once more, Reginald, I am happy; for I know you will not now prove recreant to the many vows which made you mine." She seated herself on a lounge, and beckoned him to her side. He was not loth to obey the call, and while he showered kisses on those lips that had, so often, turned to his with an ecstatic pressure, he cried, ardently:

"Prove recreant, Orle? Never! How can you think it? As before, I am now, your slave. It is a glorious captivity. Will you hold me forever?"

"Forever, Reginald. Oh! you never can know what I have suffered since we last met—in Richmond, I mean."

Her words were well calculated to arouse inquiry regarding her mysterious disappearance on the night of the opening of our story, but, under the circumstances, it was forgotten.

"And I have caused you this suffering!" he said, in a tone of self-reproach. "How unmanly I have acted. I ought to have seen that you were the only one I could love. I should have argued with myself how unreasonable to marry a woman whom I love less than I do you. My duty was to go to Cecilia Bernard, and tell her, honestly, that the best love of my heart was not for her. She would have released me—I know she would; for she is a good, a noble girl, Orle."

"Yes, she is a noble girl. I have seen her," and Orle thought of her who listened to their conversation.

When the first happy transports of their meeting lulled—a meeting that proclaimed them inseparable for life—the voice of the girl changed somewhat, from its whispering music to a business strain.

"Reginald," she cried, "I must leave this house to-night."

"How!" the word was questioning.

"I must escape from here—"

"Escape! Are you a prisoner?" and he looked at her in surprise.

"No, not a prisoner; but, I am in danger."

"Danger? Explain, Orle—what do you mean?"

"I can not explain, fully, dear Reginald; but, I must tell you that every moment I remain here, I imperil my life."

He drew her closer to him, and gazed wonderingly into her lovely face.

"I had hoped we might spend a long,

joyful evening together," she added. "We can not, though. If you place any value on my life, go at once for a cab. In the morning, we can leave for Richmond, where I will marry my wardrobe together. We will go from there to Charleston, thence—"

"To Richmond, Orle? I can not go there."

"Why not? There is nothing to fear. Besides, all the money I possess is in that city. Without money, we can do nothing. Our marriage can be consummated with dispatch; when we go from Richmond, we will go as man and wife."

Reginald appeared to be thinking.

"You do not hesitate to grant what I ask?" persistently.

"This is all very mysterious," he mused, aloud. "How is your life in danger? I can not understand."

"If you love me, Reginald, do not stop now to ask questions. When we are safely away, I will tell you all."

He arose from the lounge.

"Your wish is my law, Orle,"

"And every moment is precious. I would not die in this hour, Reginald, when life is doubly dear to me."

"You set my mind in a whirl by your fearful words!"

"There, there—go and get the cab. Save me."

The singular change in Orle's manner—the sudden, mysterious announcement that a violent death threatened her, filled his mind with turbid wonderment and conjecture.

But, she had besought him not to pause for questions; on his value of her life, she had begged him make haste, and, in a state of excitement impossible to describe, he clasped her to him in a final caress, then hurried away.

She followed him to the entry, again assured him to make haste, and when she heard the front door close, she re-entered her apartment.

Cecilia stood before her, with pale face and cold, gazing eyes.

"Well, you have heard?" asked the beauty.

"Yes—all."

"You are convinced, then, that Reginald loves me more than he does you?"

"Yes."

"And you relinquish all claim upon him?"

"Yes. As I have said, I would never wed a man whose love is divided."

"Thank you!—thank you!" Orle threw her arms around the other's neck, and kissed her.

They were startled by a cat-like step behind them.

Cecilia uttered a cry, and Orle wheeled round to find herself face to face with a demon shape—a thing hardly human— which crouched down nearly to the floor, and glared upon her with eyes that were scarce discernible but for their snaky glitter.

"Meg Semper!" Orle recoiled before the terrible being that confronted her.

The swollen head, the frightful gash upon the mouth, the jagged edges of which were pulled, cushion-like, and blistering in the terrible fever that consumed her; the ferocious expression of a face distorted, and half hidden by matted locks of hair that fell reckless and wild upon the brow; the nervous swaying of the body, as if influenced by strong drink; the hard grip upon a murderous knife, whose blade was fresh and keen from the whetstone—all this was a picture sufficient to terrify stouter hearts than throbbed in the bosoms of the two girls.

Orle and Cecilia exchanged a quick glance.

Simultaneously a shining dagger appeared in the hand of each, and, with ash faces, and compressed, bloodless lips, they dared to brave the satanic form.

"Meg Semper—begone!" cried Orle, though her voice faltered. "Begone, I say!"

Meg glided nearer, nearer; a hollow laugh, that told but too well of her insanity, issued from between her grinding gums.

Quick as a flash, she straightened up, and reeled toward them with a drunken step.

"Strike, Cecilia!—strike!" and as Orle uttered the words, two springy blades cut mercilessly deep in the hideous visage of the hag.

With a yelping tone that told of pain and rage, the wounded hag staggered backward—but only for a second. Gathering all the strength of a maniac fury, she sprang at them, though her vision was blurred by the warm life-tide gushing from her wounds.

Again the two daggers struck the tottering form; but their aim was less true than at first, the headlong attack was not checked, and Orle retreated, with an ugly cut upon her snowy arm.

The hag followed them up closely. Her long knife fairly whizzed as she madly circled and plunged it at him.

Suddenly, Cecilia uttered a shriek of horror.

Orle had tripped and fallen to the floor, and the dagger—her only hope—flew from her grasp.

Meg Semper, with a savage cry, threw herself upon the prostrate girl, and Cecilia, overcome by the bloody prospect, swooned away.

The knife was poised on high—in another moment it would descend to its human sheath.

Orle closed her eyes, and, with a prayer on her lips, awaited the fatal blow.

CHAPTER XXVII

THE TRAGEDY OF THE ROOM.

"Most sorry wretch! whose rage-burnt bosom seethes In hateful fires, nor will to reason bend; While reeking knife tells of the hell she breathes Through Fury's network, and—is this end?"

—ANON.

From his elevated perch, Christopher Crewly took a survey of his surroundings. Then he contemplated himself.

His duster was torn and dirty; his hands were blackened with soot; and he felt that his face might be any thing but clean.

"Well, well, well!" he thought. "If this don't heat all conscience! Never was in such a box!"

Shall I slide down again, and accept a period to my existence, in that slimy cellar?—like one who wraps the mantle of his couch about him, and lies down to sweet repose! Hardly! Shall I jump to the roof, and break my neck with a 217-1-4 fall to the ground? Scarcely!

Crewly, you're beat!" and the last was dolefully whined forth, as he glanced, for a second time, north, south, east and west.

"No use!" groaned the despairing lawyer.

"I can't make that jump, if I have to hang on here till doomsday, and I won't go back to that cellar, if I have to live on bricks and mortar, meantime. Think I'll

hang it out on this line 'if it takes all summer!'"

He closed the sentence with a determined nod, and again settled himself, by pressure, in the chimney.

Just as he did so, he heard a sound beneath him that resembled the growl of a bear. So sudden was it, that it startled him, and he came near slipping from his hold.

"Bless me! what's that?"

He glanced downward, between his knees, and, straining his eyes, he managed to distinguish a face. It was a black face, and the voice was Nemil's that growled:

"Come down!"

"What for?"

"Suits me better up here."

"Come down!" and the growl was a snarl.

"You don't want me to scratch through all that soot again, now, do you?"

"Come down!" repeated the negro, with a threatening accent.

"Shan't do it! Now you've got it, flat!"

"Shoot you, if you don't come down!" warned the guttural voice.

Crewly heard the cocking of a pistol.

"Bless me! you wouldn't plug a fellow in that style!"

"Come down, or I fire."

"Fire away then!—hang it!"

The chimney was a double one, and as the lawyer uttered this defiance, he scrambled with remarkable alacrity, over into the adjoining flue, nearly losing his equilibrium and going headlong downward.

From his new position, he thrust his head over the partitioning brickwork, and squeaked:

"Fire away, you son of Ebon! Where are we now? Chris, Crewly—yours forever, mur—"

"Bang!" a pistol bullet whistled close to his nose, and he involuntarily placed his hand to the organ named, under the impression that it was gone.

"Try it, if you yell, this time looking more cautiously down to where his enemy had been. But Nemil had disappeared.

Following the negro, after he and Meg had left their captive in the cellar, we find him, an hour afterward, standing alone, in the lower hall of the house, his woolly head hung in thought.

"What good?" he ruminated. "Will it better us to have this man's carcass tell a tale upon us when we are gone? None. I know the facts of such, too well, to misclass him. Curiosity, I guess, an idle meddler, with no object. So, if he go away, what harm is done?"

He retraced his way to the cellar. But Crewly had disappeared.

At first, his thick brain was at loss. Soon, however, a kind of instinct drew his attention to the chimney-place, and he glanced up it.

The discovery he made, was followed by a summons for the lawyer to descend; with what result, we have seen.

Cursing himself for not having knotted the ropes tighter, he ascended the stairs, carefully locking the door. He continued on to the top of the house, and, with a grunt of satisfaction, securely fastened down the trap-door.

"Let him stay where he is!" he muttered. "If he escape now, I'll brain myself for a dolt. I would have set him free—fool!"

When Meg Semper started for the room in which were Orle Deice and Cecilia, the African observed that her condition was growing dangerous. He saw, that, with every moment, the poison from the spider-fang made her wilder—and that wildness was the more to be feared, because of her unusual, moping silence.

"She is getting devilish," he resolved, as he followed her with a thoughtful gaze.

She means some harm to Orle Deice, for I heard her say it. I want no blood spilt here; I'm not minded to sit behind prison-bars, with a state crust to munch upon. I'll watch you, Meg Semper, and he stole noiselessly after her.

When he had persuaded her away from the frightened girls—as shown in a previous chapter—she sought her room. Nemil followed.

"What do you want at my heels?" she snapped, turning suddenly upon him.

"I want sleep," he answered. "There's a rug in your room that rests my bones marvelously when I lie upon it."

Instantly she suspected that he was watching her.

"Come on, then."

He failed to perceive the cunning gleam that fired her half-blind eyes, and cast himself upon the rug he had mentioned.

In the same moment, however, he arose, and returned to Orle Deice with the warning of her peril.

Rejoining the hag, he found her seated near a window, her hands in her lap, and gaze bent absent on the floor. But she had been active during his absence. In the folds of her dress, she now held a small vial, and though she seemed lost to her surroundings, she was quietly noting his every movement.

When Nemil stretched himself out full length on the soft rug, he pretended to fall asleep. But this artificial repose was fatal to his intentions. Night's shades were creeping into the room; a drowsy air, combined with the increasing dark, and it was not long ere he actually slumbered.

Then the hag arose from her chair and stealthily approached him.

He snored loudly; and a diabolical grin wrestled with the stiffness of her face, as she slowly uncorked the vial.

She held the tiny bottle close to his nose. A peculiar odor began to float in the atmosphere of the room. He writhed and groaned in his sleep; but the drug had already commenced its work; he was fast yielding to its powerful influence.

When she deemed him helpless, she recoiled the vial, and with a dizzy head (for she had inhaled much of the stuff herself) staggered to the bed. In a twinkling she tore the quilt into strips and proceeded to bind his arms, wrists, and ankles.

As she finished the task, she heard the summons at the front door, and, passing out into the entry-way, caught sight of Orle Deice, who dimly flitted before her.

Nemil was not long in recovering from the effects of the drug.

A curse that was deep and dire, spoke his eloquent at being overtaken by the hag.

He strained and tugged at his bonds, but Meg had knotted them with no novice hand, and his struggles went for naught. After repeated desperate attempts to release himself, he gave it up, and lay there, foaming cursed anathemas.

Then he heard some one at the front door—voices—footsteps—silence. Pretty soon, the footsteps again, followed by another closing of the door.

Suddenly a piercing shriek echoed through the house, and roused to a desperation bord-

ering on madness, he centered his enormous strength in one final, mighty effort, and snapped the bonds.

Without delay he loosened his limbs, and dashed away in the direction of sounds that told him of a fearful struggle going on.

He reached Orle's room, just in time to see Herwin Reese reeling backward, with a murderous wound in his throat.

Meg Semper, blinded by her own blood, and that of the man who had felt the keen point of her weapon, now turned upon the African with a mad, furious yell.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 90.)

The Specter Canoe.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

Look! there it is now! and indistinctly through the mist upon the moonlit lake, I could discover a dark object moving rapidly across the water.

"Give it a shot, sir," I said to my friend.

"No, I never shoot until I know what I am aiming at," I answered, and, as if disappointed, my companion, a youth of eighteen, returned:

"Well, if you did shoot, you couldn't hit it."

"Perhaps not," and I continued to gaze upon the object of apparition, until it was lost to sight in the dim distance.

I had been spending a few days with a friend, at his country home in the northern part of New York, and since my arrival the theme of conversation had been the appearance of a specter canoe, with one occupant, that was frequently seen at night upon the broad and beautiful lake, near which my friend's residence stood.

Urged by curiosity, I had readily agreed to a proposal of young Paul Maynard to go with him by moonlight and watch for the apparition, and he was the companion who had pointed out to me the specter I had seen.

Upon hearing my statement the following morning at breakfast, regarding the reality of some object being seen upon the lake, Mr. Maynard remarked:

"It is really very strange; there are old hunters about here who used to fire upon the specter whenever discovered, but their balls proved harmless, and now they never visit the lake-shore at night-time. Paul himself has wasted several pounds of powder and ball upon the object, but admits his inability to hit it. Suppose, now, colonel, you try and solve the mystery for us."

"I am willing to make the attempt, sir, I assure you," I answered, and with Paul's assistance I commenced my preparations.

First, I secured a good birchen canoe, then loaded and prepared my rifle and pistols, and with my hunting-knife and a flask of good brandy, considered myself competent to cope with any spirit of the lake.

Shortly after nightfall, Paul conducted me to the spot upon the lake where we had discovered the specter the night before, and launching my canoe, I entered it, shook hands with Paul, and shoved off from the shore, while my companion returned to the house, not caring to remain alone upon the shore of the lonely lake.

Quietly paddling, I urged the canoe forward, and when about half a mile from the land, I ceased, and lay down in the bottom to await coming events.

One, two, three hours passed, and then above the tree-tops the sky began to grow bright with the light of the rising moon, and I feared the mystery would not be solved that night. But, no; the sound of the stroke of a paddle in the water broke the stillness of the night, and about fifty yards distant I discovered a canoe moving rapidly through the water and urged on by a form standing erect, and with slow and steady strokes driving the light vessel swiftly forward.

Never it approached, and as the moon just then cast its light above the tree-tops, I discovered that the form was that of a woman, for her long hair floated down her back, and her white robe fluttered loosely in the wind.

"This, then, is the specter canoe—but who can the woman be?" I thought.

"To seize my oar and start in pursuit—for I now saw by the rapid movement of the paddle that I had been discovered—was the work of an instant, and swiftly over the moonlit waters did our light boats bound.

Delicate woman though she was, she held her distance for some time, and then slowly I began to gain upon her.

Upon discovering me, she had doubled upon her course and was now heading across the lake, which was here about five miles wide, to a rocky point of land that jutted out into the water, and behind which lay a dense forest.

Slowly, very slowly did I gain upon the specter canoe, and only as our canoes grated upon the pebbly beach did I spring out, and catch her firmly, but politely, by the hand.

The dark, beautiful eyes turned wildly upon me in the moonlight; the hand sought a pistol in her belt; but suddenly her manner changed, she drooped her head and burst into tears.

"Pardon me, miss, if I have pained or frightened you; it was unintentional upon my part to intrude upon you unasked, but your strange conduct has awakened the curiosity of the entire neighborhood, and to solve the mystery of the specter canoe, was my object in this forcing myself, perhaps rudely, upon you."

Still no word from the beautiful statue—for she had ceased her sobbing and stood motionless by my side.

I knew that my apology had been awkwardly given, but I was nonplussed and knew not what else to say.

The awkward silence was soon terminated by the appearance of an old white-haired man upon the scene, who, as he approached, exclaimed reprovingly: "Oh, Ida, Ida, why do you leave me thus?" and then turning to me, he continued:

"I saw you coming across the lake and hurried here to meet you. You see my daughter has never been right in her mind, sir, since some years ago, when, when—a fancy city chap—came up here and stole her love; he broke her heart, and never came back to marry her, as he promised, and of nights she will steal off in her canoe and paddle over the waters where they used to sail together. Ida has been shot at by the hunters, and has caused strange stories to get abroad about the lake being haunted, but I hope she will do better now. I can not ask you to my humble home yonder in the woods, so we must say good-night."

Still no word from the beautiful woman; and, with sadness at my heart for her bitter fate, I entered my canoe and recrossed the lake to my friend's house.

It soon became noised about in the neighborhood who was the occupant of the specter canoe, and never since has the unfortunate lady been disturbed as she glides over the moonlit waters of the lake.

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THE WOOD-SAWYER'S DECLARATION.

BY JOE JOT, JR.

Oh, Lady fair, here at thy feet
My fortune down I lay,
Will thou not share it all, my sweet?
It is a dollar a day.
Thy path shall be a path of peace
As mortal ne'er had known,
I'd press thy lip with many a kiss
And hire the washing done.
Thy life shall be one peaceful rest
Of endless joy; and, ah,
Thy heart shall never be distressed
While there is wood to saw!
I'll crown thy brow with roses rare,
And royal shalt thou look,
And thou shalt feast on sumptuous fare,
And I will be the cook.
The birds shall pipe their carol close—
The oriole and finch;
Thine eyes shall never weep, because
Thy shoes shall never pinch.
In sylvan bowers thou shalt dwell
With books on rustic shelf,
And song will follow like a spell
Though I must sing myself.
Around thy dwelling, lady mine,
Cold blasts shall never blow,
On beds of flowers thou shalt recline
While I will milk the cow.
The sun shall ever shine on thee
To light thy joyous way,
And I'm in a terrible hurry to go to sawing wood,
Oh, wilt thou have me? say!

The Demon of the Cliffs.

BY CAPT. CHARLES HOWARD.

"Come, child, the night is dark, and a storm is brewing at sea. If the gods frown we shall reap a rich harvest before dawn."
The speaker was an old man, uncouthly clad, who seemed to look the name by which he was known—the Demon of the Cliffs.

For years he had dwelt among the crags that looked far out upon the turbulent waves of the Atlantic, and many were the dark deeds attributed—and not without just cause—to him. Many a staunch vessel, it was said, he sent to destruction among the breakers at the foot of the cliffs; but he had never been detected in crime.

The person whom he called "child," upon the night of his introduction to the reader, was a beautiful girl, just passing the confines of her sixteenth year. Her form was sylph-like, and faultless even to the minutest particular, and her long, wavy tresses of raven hue, and deep black eyes added to her uncultivated loveliness. A marked contrast, indeed, was she to the old man who called her child, and feasted his aged eyes upon her beauty, as she stepped to his side.

"Father, no ships will seek a haven hereabouts to-night," she said. "Do let us remain indoors, and let the storm roar without."

"Not no! To the Lion's Head!" almost shrieked the dotard, and, grasping the girl's arm, he hurried her from the hidden hut to the crags.

At length the twain reached a crag that resembled the head of the king of beasts, and the old man released the girl's arm.

"Now, look out to sea, girl," he said, "for my old eyes are growing dim. By heavens! is not that a ship's light, yonder?"

"Yes," answered the girl, as a sorrowful sigh welled from her heart. "Oh, God! must that noble vessel meet a dreadful doom among the rocks?"

"No such talk as that, Adaline," gruffly responded the old man, proceeding to light a basin lamp, while the child-woman peered over the lion's head. "I want no whimpering. Remember that I am your father—your father, girl—your FATHER!"

She looked up, and scrutinized his face while he turned his attention to the lamp.

"I can not believe that he is my father," she murmured, still gazing upon him.

"Though, since the dawn of recollection, I have lived with him—yes, helped him, though with unwilling hands, as God knows—to lure noble ships and precious lives to doom."

As she spoke, a peal of thunder reverberated from Stygian horizon to horizon, and a hurricane swept inward from the sea. Brighter and brighter flashed the lamp, and allured by its light, the ship neared the Lion's Head.

At length the vessel seemed to lie directly beneath the old man and Adaline. Her decks swarmed with people, and suddenly, above the roar of the breakers, the girl heard a wild shriek of despair.

"We are lost!" it cried, "lured to death by the old man of the cliffs!"

She witnessed the futile attempts made to save the ship. The wind continued to drive her shoreward, and, at last, with a terrible crash, down she went amid a hell of hissing waters.

The old man turned upon the child-woman with a hideous grin of triumph. He rubbed his old hands gleefully over the result of his dark schemes, and then burst into a demoniacal cackling.

"We've succeeded, Adaline!" he cried, "and I fancy we have secured a rich prize. Now let us go below and collect the spoils."

With a reproachful look, that should have touched the demon's heart, Adaline rose to her feet, and, taking up the lamp, the old man led the way to the foot of the cliffs.

Already the rocks were strewn with drenched and lifeless bodies, pieces of the ill-fated ship, and dozens of boxes containing valuables.

"This is the richest prize we ever lured to doom," said the old man, surveying the work of his hands. "We will never—Adaline, girl, what are you doing?"

The girl bent over the handsome face of a young man, and pushed back the wet masses of auburn hair that the winds and waves had thrown over his beauty.

"He's so lovely, father!" she replied, looking up at the old man. "Come and see. Oh, how I wish he was not dead!"

With an oath for the girl's wish, old Job Hardheart staggered forward, and reached Adaline's side as she started back, with eyes staring at the cold, wet face.

"He gasped!" she cried, turning to the old man.

"He did, eh?" was the hissed ejaculation that parted Job's lips, and his hand glided to his bosom.

"Father!" cried Adaline, divining his intention, as springing to the young man's side, she raised her arms protectively over him. "You shall not kill him. He is too beautiful so to die. I will defend him with my life!"

Her determined manner startled the old man, and his hand slowly crept from his breast, but he grasped not a knife.

"I will humor the girl for the moment," he muttered, as he stepped forward. "But

that young chap shall never leave those cliffs to tell that he saw old Job Hardheart lure a vessel to her doom!"

The girl permitted him to approach, and together they restored the young man to life.

He was borne to the hut, and was soon in a comfortable situation. Unceasingly Adaline watched him, thus baffling the old man, who yearned to deal the death-blow.

The days passed away, and the young man—Robert Ventnor by name—remained an inmate of the cabin among the crags. At length he was able to move about, and one night the old man invited him to a stroll along the cliffs.

Not unsuspicious, Robert Ventnor assented, and leaving Adaline, to all appearances, gazing listlessly out of the low window, he and the old man set out for the precipices.

Job Hardheart led his guest to the Lion's Head.

"Do you gaze intently to sea," said the old man, turning suddenly upon the young planter, whose sharp eyes were fixed upon him. "Methinks I behold a vessel's light."

For an instant Ventnor was thrown off his guard, and that instant came near proving fatal to him. With flashing eyes, and a drawn knife, the Demon of the Cliffs threw himself upon the young Carolinian, who turned as he struck him, and together the twain struggled upon the edge of that dizzy height.

At length down upon his knees the youth was forced, and the glittering blade towered above him like the sword of Damocles.

"Die!" hissed Job Hardheart, and the knife started on its deadly descent, when a club descended upon the wrecker's head, and he fell backward with a groan.

Ventnor sprang to his feet to confront Adaline, whose hands still gripped the club that had saved his life.

"Two lives I owe you, girl," he cried, gazing admiringly into her beautiful face; "and the debt of gratitude I can never pay. But, see! he starts."

They turned to the wrecker, whose rolling eyes, and quiverings of frame, told the twain that he was dying.

"Your blow finished me, girl," he said, in feeble voice, fastening his eyes upon Adaline, "and it were justice that I should die by your hands—I who lured your parents to death among these breakers. I found you in the arms of your dead nurse, and as hard as my heart was, I could not kill the beautiful little babe thus strangely thrown into my

hands. Therefore, I took you to my hut, and brought you up as my child. Your name, as I learned by the ship clerk's book, is Florence Argyle. I called you Adaline, because my wife, who died many years ago, wore that name."

"Oh, could I restore your parents to you, girl," he went on, after a long pause. "But the sea gives not up its dead till the day of judgment. But my gold—which has damned me—is yours, if you want it. Robert Ventnor, I tried to kill you, for which, forgive me, if you can. God sent you here that, through you, I might receive the vengeance he has set apart for me. It is just. I murmur not."

As he uttered the last word, his head fell back upon the cold cliff, and the Demon was dead.

Florence Argyle would touch none of Job Hardheart's ill-gotten gold, and, giving it over to the Executive of North Carolina, without feasting her eyes upon the shining heaps, a charitable institution was endowed thereby.

She accompanied Robert Ventnor to his father's almost princely mansion, in which, a year later, she became the bride of the man whose life she had saved.

THE DEMON OF THE CLIFFS.

light the words, "Man of the Bears," uttered with much emphasis.

That was it, then. They knew Old Grizzly Adams, with whom I was trapping, was in the neighborhood, and well knowing his prowess from severe experience, they wished to dispose of their captive before the dreaded scout should be upon them and spoil their game.

I had left Old Grizzly in camp, busy with a young cub he was training, my object in coming out being to procure some fresh meat for the youngsters.

The mention of that name seemed to decide the matter, and without further parley, the red-skins moved off at a rapid gait toward a heavy piece of timber, that lay along the river bank.

Under ordinary circumstances I could have released the prisoner on the spot, but it so chanced that I had left my six-shooter, a most unusual thing, in camp, taking with me only my rifle and hunting-knife.

With only a single ball the attempt would have been madness. Even if the remaining two fled, after my shooting one, they would inevitably have tomahawked their captive before doing so.

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making the whole an almost solid mass of verdure, totally impervious to the eye.

Behind this was still another beech, smaller than the first, and around and over it also the vine had thrown its folds, connecting the two by a natural bridge of strongest material.

To the foot of the large beech the captive had been bound, and already the circle of dry, inflammable wood was being piled.

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Equally rapid was I in forming a plan for the captive's release.

Not by any sudden assault, unexpected dash, or slyly cutting the thongs from the opposite side of the tree, was I to accomplish this difficult feat.

My intention was simply to work upon the highly superstitious natures of these "rude sons of the plains."

Leaving them busily engaged in collecting and piling up the fagots about the victim, I drew suddenly back, again skirted the clearing, and finally halted at the foot of the little beech tree.

Strapping my rifle upon my back I mounted into the branches, and, taking advantage of moments when the red-skins were most busy or perhaps talking loudly, made my way across from the small into the large tree to which the victim was lashed.

It was a laborious, and, of course, a hazardous task, but I at length succeeded in obtaining a position directly above the party below.

This done, I at once set to work preparing my surprise, which was to consist solely of a pellet of dampened powder.

Pouring a quantity of that article from my horn into the palm of my hand, I wet it with spittle sufficiently to make it into a compact mass; then forming it in the shape of a cone, the more readily to ignite it.

The ball was about the size of a walnut, and probably as long as my finger.

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The flame ran rapidly along the combus-

tion, and was then attached with a long cord to the tail of one of the Arab's horses.

In this manner the unfortunate captives were dragged along for eight days, without being allowed any other subsistence than bread and water.

At length they reached the mountain Felix, and were brought before the Sheik Osman.

He inquired what country they were of; and being told France, exclaimed:

"France, without faith; lawless, spiteful, malignant devils! Let them be chained."

The order was put into immediate execution. They were first stripped of their clothes, and supplied with nothing more than a sort of petticoat or trowsers. They were then bound together, two and two, to a large chain ten feet in length, and weighing about sixty pounds; and thus, half-naked and in irons, they were taken to the prison appropriated for slaves.

"A little straw," says Dumont, "was allowed us to lie on, with a stone for a pillow, and permission to sleep, if we could."

"Although I felt my wounds extremely painful, particularly one inflicted by a lance, I was compelled to labor with the rest at six every morning, dragging along my chain.

Our food for the day was three ears of Indian corn, which were thrown to us as if we were dogs."

All the time the slaves were at work the Koukals formed a circle around them, not so much to prevent their running away, as to protect them from the lions and tigers who would otherwise devour them.

"There are always," says Dumont, "a hundred and fifty armed men to watch over the safety of an hundred slaves. But though the Koukals are incessantly on the look-out, it will not prevent the lion from sometimes carrying off its prey, if greatly pressed by hunger. One remarkable circumstance is that the shouts and outcries of men will drive the wild beasts back into the woods; whereas, peals of musketry draw numbers of them out of the forest, as if curiosity formed some part of their instinct."

"But nothing," continues Dumont, "could exceed the horrors of what we endured one day from the prison taking fire, with all the slaves shut up in it. Though no lives were lost, our beards and hair were partly consumed. The water intended for our use was turned off to extinguish the flames. The heat and the torrents of smoke were suffocating, so that we foamed at the mouth; and at one time, we were in apprehension of being burnt alive. No one thought of unloosing us, probably from a dread of some confusion and disorders; and only the usual quantities of water were dealt out to us at the usual times. Nor was this all; for a liberal distribution of the bamboo ensued, applied to some for setting fire to the place from negligence; to others for not foreseeing the accident, and to others for an imputed criminal intention, as if they would take an advantage of such an opportunity to effect their escape."

After being thirty-three years in slavery, Dumont was one of five hundred Christians who were exchanged for the two sons of Osman, taken prisoners by the Bey Feroz.

Dumont, now became the slave of a new master, but received much better treatment: his irons were struck off, he was clothed, and had two black loaves, of five ounces each, and seven or eight olives allowed him daily.

At Algiers he remained eight months. At length the great deliverer, Lord Exmouth, with the British fleet, appeared before Algiers, and obtained the surrender of all the Christian slaves of every nation. Dumont adds:

"We were taken in by a number of English boats, and there it was that our last chains fell off, not without the deep sighs and regrets of three thousand renegades, who despaired of obtaining deliverance, and cursed the day wherein they apostatized from the Christian faith."

An Odd Character.—That dwarfs are not all pigmies in mind as well as body, was illustrated in the singular career of Jeffery Hudson who figures in the histories of Charles II. court as one of its most singular characters. This little fellow was, in fact, twice captured at sea, by pirates, and sold into slavery, and his succeeding life was one of novel adventure.

Jeffery, whose height did not exceed eighteen inches, until he had reached his thirtieth year, after which he shot up to three feet nine inches, and who was once actually served up to the royal table in a cold pie, had, nevertheless, a high opinion of his own consequence; nor was he thought, even by others, of insignificant consideration, having been employed as envoy to fetch an accoucheur for the queen from France.

Soon after his return from his embassy, he quarreled at court with a gentleman of the name of Croft, whom he challenged. Mr. Croft coming to the rendezvous, armed only with a squirt, the little creature was so enraged that a real duel ensued; and the appointment being on horseback with pistols, to put them more on a level, with the first fire he shot his antagonist dead.

The duel having incurred the displeasure of his royal mistress, Jeffery was expelled the court and sent to sea, when he was taken by a Turkish rover, and sold as a slave into Barbary.

He did not remain long in slavery, but returned to England, and in 1683 was committed to the Gatehouse on suspicion of being concerned in the Popish plot. In this prison he terminated his eventful life at the age of sixty-three.

A Strange Offense.—In 1717 the following singular commitment to the Bastille was made out by order of the Duke of Orleans, Regent during the minority of Louis XV. of France. "Laurence d'Henry, for disrespect to King George I., in not mentioning him in his almanac as King of Great Britain."

How long this unlucky almanac-maker remained in prison is unknown. The Register of the Bastille, when examined at the revolution, afforded no information on the subject.

After this specimen of capacity of the House of Orleans to govern, we don't wonder the French people of to-day want no more of it!

Humanity Rewarded.—A poor Macedonian soldier was one day leading before Alexander a mule laden with gold for the king's use; the beast being so tired that he was not able either to go or sustain the load, the mule-driver took it off, and carried it himself with great difficulty a considerable way. Alexander seeing him just sinking under the burden, and about to throw it on the ground, cried out: "Friend, do not be weary yet; try and carry it quite through to thy tent, for it is all thy own."



THE DEMON OF THE CLIFFS.

hands. Therefore, I took you to my hut, and brought you up as my child. Your name, as I learned by the ship clerk's book, is Florence Argyle. I called you Adaline, because my wife, who died many years ago, wore that name."

"Oh, could I restore your parents to you, girl," he went on, after a long pause. "But the sea gives not up its dead till the day of judgment. But my gold—which has damned me—is yours, if you want it. Robert Ventnor, I tried to kill you, for which, forgive me, if you can. God sent you here that, through you, I might receive the vengeance he has set apart for me. It is just. I murmur not."

As he uttered the last word, his head fell back upon the cold cliff, and the Demon was dead.

Florence Argyle would touch none of Job Hardheart's ill-gotten gold, and, giving it over to the Executive of North Carolina, without feasting her eyes upon the shining heaps, a charitable institution was endowed thereby.

She accompanied Robert Ventnor to his father's almost princely mansion, in which, a year later, she became the bride of the man whose life she had saved.

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light the words, "Man of the Bears," uttered with much emphasis.

That was it, then. They knew Old Grizzly Adams, with whom I was trapping, was in the neighborhood, and well knowing his prowess from severe experience, they wished to dispose of their captive before the dreaded scout should be upon them and spoil their game.

I had left Old Grizzly in camp, busy with a young cub he was training, my object in coming out being to procure some fresh meat for the youngsters.

The mention of that name seemed to decide the matter, and without further parley, the red-skins moved off at a rapid gait toward a heavy piece of timber, that lay along the river bank.

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